GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

QUALITY TESTED · GOOD · HOUSEKEEPING Since 1909 LIMITED WARRANTY · ghseal.com for details

CLEANING SHORTCUTS

250 HOUSEHOLD TRICKS

TO SAVE YOU TIME & MONEY

EASY
ROOM-BY-ROOM GUIDE FOR A SPARKLING HOME

HEARST specials

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

CONTENTS

ESSENTIALS........................ 2
COMMON PROBLEMS 14
KITCHEN............................ 30
BATHROOM......................... 40
BEDROOM........................... 52
LAUNDRY ROOM.................. 62
GARAGE + OUTDOOR........ 74
STAIN RESCUE.................... 84

CHAPTER 1

ESSENTIALS

Set up your tidying kit for success with must-have tools, all-natural hacks, genius products and time-saving solutions. We even give you a chart to help you plan every task.

THE AGE OF SPEED
CHILDCRAFT
Fisher-Price
Narnia

Text, Alyssa Longobucco. Photograph, Mike Garten. Interior design, Joni Lay.

MUST-HAVE TOOLS

Stock your cleaning caddy with essentials to save time and avoid headaches

1 MICROFIBER CLOTH

Why it's magic This machine-washable cloth, made of nylon and polyester, works wet or dry. The fibers are split into thousands of filaments that grip dirt and oils and can create a static charge that attracts dust.

How to use it Dampen a cloth for general cleaning (e.g., counters), and use a dry one for buffing shiny surfaces. **GH Tip:** To keep cloths in good shape, launder separately, without fabric softener or bleach.

2 VACUUM

Why it's magic Dust and dirt are but a distant memory thanks to the quick-clean power of modern vacuums. From self-operating robot vacs to light-and-easy cordless versions, there's a vacuum to suit any dirty job.

How to use it Choose one that works for your space. Mostly bare floors? Opt for a versatile canister vac whose attachments (including a bare-floor brush) help you get into tight corners. If your home is mostly carpeted, choose one that touts an adjustable-height brush roll to transition easily over carpet-pile heights.

3 BROOM & DUSTPAN

Why it's magic Sweep away the competition (that's crumbs and dust bunnies) with a classic straw, broomcorn or synthetic fiber version. It's easy to use and store, and you can pull it out and get the job done.

How to use it While the how-to is pretty obvious (sweeping is everyone's fave chore, right?), the care of your broom might not be. Preserve its bristles by storing on a rack fiber side up. Cleaning the fiber regularly with hot, soapy water will help extend its life.

4 MOP & BUCKET

Why it's magic Soak up spills and erase dried-on mud with a microfiber or sponge version. You may also consider a steam mop for extra-stubborn grime: It relies on heated water alone (no chemicals!), and some models come with attachments for windows, counters and toilets, too.

How to use it Fill a bucket with hot water and make sure to wring out the excess before taking it to your floors. For steam mops, be mindful of the size, weight and style and use only on sealed flooring surfaces —a removable water tank is always a plus!

5 PAPER TOWEL

Why it's magic Whether you're de-streaking windows or sopping up liquid, look for a towel that's strong and absorbent. The more it can handle, the less rolls you run through. (Good news for you *and* the environment.)

How to use it Team with water or an all-purpose cleaner to tackle everything from mirrors to a greasy stovetop. **GH Tip:** Best for cleaning counters and sinks after handling raw meat; any contaminants are tossed away with the towel, not stuck in a cloth or sponge where they can grow.

6 SQUEEGEE

Why it's magic A rubber-edged blade set on a handle, it makes cleaning glass and windows a cinch and helps keep showers soap-scum free.

How to use it Spritz windows with a cleaning solution and use a cloth or sponge to spread the solution and dissolve dirt. Then, with a silicone or rubber squeegee, wipe away the residual cleaner. You can also use a squeegee to remove moisture that collects in the shower.

7 CHLORINE BLEACH

Why it's magic The liquid goes beyond boosting your whites in the laundry room. It also sanitizes post-sickness and works wonders on stained porcelain.

How to use it Soak toys in a diluted formula to kill mold spores and bacteria that can cause illness; wipe wood cutting boards to avoid cross-contamination; and remove mildew from tile grout.

8 CADDY

Why it's magic The pros know to keep everything they need handy. Take a cue from them and, before tackling chores, load your caddy with supplies, especially those small but often-forgotten items like rubber gloves, cotton swabs, a toothbrush and disinfecting wipes.

How to use it Corral tools and cleaners in a plastic-handled bin and store in an easy-to-access place, safely out of reach of kids and pets.

Text, Alyssa Longobucco. Photograph, Getty Images.

SPEED CLEANING

8 CLEANING TASKS YOU CAN TACKLE IN 5 MINUTES

Because that's really all the extra time you have anyway, right?

1

LOAD THE DISHWASHER WITH EVERYTHING EXCEPT DISHWARE
Plastic toys, soap dishes, plastic hairbrushes and much more can go in the dishwasher—zero effort required. Take a lap around your house, gather the stuff you rarely (err, never?) clean and run an everything-but-plates load. For safety, skip the heated-dry option and dry by hand.

2

WALK AROUND WITH A LINT ROLLER
This portable, versatile closet staple is a master at lifting dirt, crumbs and dust from all those spots where you've let them languish. Run it over lampshades and curtains and underneath couch cushions and other hard-to-reach spots to spiff them up.

3

BANISH DUST FROM BASEBOARDS
You can tackle dingy spots using a wet cloth. Lightly spray it with water or an all-purpose cleaning solution and run it over the baseboards to whisk debris away in a flash.

4

GIVE YOUR GADGETS SOME ATTENTION
Your cell phone probably harbors more germs than your toilet seat (um, ick), and you probably never clean it. Run an alcohol wipe over the surface of all your often-handled electronics (that includes your TV remote).

5

WIPE DOWN YOUR PURSE
It's kind of remarkable how some things we touch daily we rarely clean—your purse is one of them. About a third of women's bags have fecal bacteria on them, reveals research from a microbiologist at the University of Arizona, so give yours a swipe with a disinfecting wipe, which helps kill bacteria.

6

FRESHEN YOUR GARBAGE DISPOSER
Got a sink stink you just can't kick? Try running a couple of lemon rinds or ice cubes through your garbage disposer. Follow with cold water to dispel the smell.

7

CLEAR DEBRIS FROM CEILING FANS
Before the first hot day causes you to flip your fan's switch, make sure it won't fling dust all over the room. An old pillowcase makes quick and tidy work of making your fan blades sparkle again. Slip the case onto each blade, then slide it off, gathering the fabric around the blade so the dust stays inside the pillowcase. Genius!

8

FOR GOODNESS' SAKE, JUST TOSS THAT PILE OF OLD CATALOGS
There are certain things you just don't need to think about before you get rid of them. Recycle that stack cluttering your nightstand, no questions asked, and feel the lightness of free space in seconds.

Text, Lauren Piro. Photograph, Getty Images.

NATIONAL INSURANCE BUSINESS NOTES
HOUSEHOLD (V. BORING)
BANKING
INCOME TAX & WORKING TAX CREDIT
ABOUT CONTAINER
ABOUT CONTAINER
WORK BY CONTAINER
TEACH
CONTAINER MISC 2
CONTAINER MISC 1

Expert Advice

CLEAN BY THE CLOCK

When you're overwhelmed by a room so messy you don't know where to start, imagine the floor plan as a clock face. Pick a corner you consider to be 12 and focus on completely decluttering only that area before moving on to 1, then 2, and so on until you're finished.

12 PRO CLEANER HABITS YOU SHOULD TOTALLY STEAL

1

THINK OF EVERYTHING AS A GRID
Whether it's a mirror, a countertop or an entire floor, visualizing it as a grid means you won't miss a spot or clean any area twice.

2

WORK FROM TOP TO BOTTOM
Always do your floors last. That way you're not shaking dust and dirt onto any surface you've already cleaned.

3

CORRAL CORDS
Electrical cords are dust magnets. Avoid this by zip-tying them together or even tacking them up off the floor.

4

USE HOOKS, NOT BINS
It's way easier to hang something up than to find the right bin. Plus, hooks keep things visible—once something goes into a bin, it's out of sight and out of mind.

5

HAVE "HOUSE-ONLY" SHOES
Taking shoes off at the door helps keep dirt outside. Designate a pair of slippers or sneakers as your indoor shoes.

6

USE COOKING DOWNTIME
Don't waste time watching that pot boil. As food cooks, wipe counters, rinse prep tools and put stuff away.

7

TREAT STAINS RIGHT AWAY
Grab the prewash stain remover as soon as you see a spot—just be sure to read the label to know when you have to do laundry.

8

CLEAN A LITTLE EVERY DAY
Spend about five minutes on a daily basis doing quick cleaning tasks to make deep cleans much easier later.

9

DEAL WITH CLOTHING AS SOON AS YOU TAKE IT OFF
Whether you hang it, add it to the laundry bin or fold it, never let anything land on the floor.

10

FINISH WITH THE BATHROOM
To lower bacteria transfer, start your chores in the bedroom, then move to high-germ zones like the kitchen and bathroom.

11

VACUUM FIRST, THEN MOP
This way, you'll capture loose dirt before it gets pushed around. When mopping, start from the far corner and work toward the door.

12

LISTEN TO PODCASTS
Turn this chore into less of a bore with a little entertainment. You'll clean harder and the time will seem to go faster.

16 MINUTES TO A CLEAN HOUSE

Yes, we just told you to end with the bathroom (#10, *left*), but this is a special case—unexpected guests are mere minutes away and the house is a mess!

1. START WITH THE BATHROOM
Use an all-purpose disinfecting wipe to clean the sink, counter and toilet top. Wipe down the mirror and fixtures, straighten the shower curtain and hang fresh towels.

2. MOVE ON TO THE KITCHEN
Hide dirty dishes and cookware in the dishwasher if it's empty; if not, hide them in the oven. Use a wipe to clean the counters.

3. DECLUTTER LIVING SPACES
Put newspapers, magazines, shoes and other clutter into a shopping bag or laundry basket, then hide the bag or basket in a bedroom or a closet. Dust major furniture surfaces.

4. END WITH THE FLOORS
Vacuum main traffic areas and living spaces, including carpets and bare floors. Store the vacuum in the closet and greet your guests!

Text, Lauren Smith, Carolyn Forté (16 Minutes to a Clean House). Photograph, Mike Garten. Interior Design, Chango & Co.

12 CLEANING PROBLEMS YOU CAN SOLVE WITH BAKING SODA

Sure, it's best for Grandma's cookies, but its real claim to fame is its power to freshen and clean

1

GREASY PANS AND DISHES
Give baked-on food the one-two punch by dialing up your dish detergent's power with baking soda.

2

A FOUL FRIDGE
They sell those fridge packs for a reason. Baking soda will absorb strong food odors so they don't linger.

3

GRIMY FRUITS AND VEGGIES
Mixed with water, baking soda can take off dirt and the waxy coating on produce.

4

A MESSY KITCHEN
Use baking soda with water to wipe countertops, stainless steel, microwaves and cooking utensils.

5

STAINED PLASTIC FOOD CONTAINERS
Wipe with a sponge sprinkled with baking soda. Or, erase tough stains by soaking in a solution of four tablespoons of baking soda and a quart of warm water.

6

MUSTY CARPET AND UPHOLSTERY
Deodorize the soft, cushy places around your house by sprinkling surfaces with baking soda, letting it sit for 15 minutes, then vacuuming it up.

7

GRUNGY BATH TOYS
Fight the effects of grubby hands by wiping toys with a sponge dipped in baking soda and water.

8

DUSTY STUFFED TOYS
Place them in a plastic bag with a cup of baking soda. Secure the top, take the bag outside and shake well. The baking soda helps draw out soil and dust. Remove from bag and vacuum everything away.

9

A CLOGGED DRAIN
Pour half a cup of baking soda down it, followed by half a cup of vinegar. Cover with a cloth to contain the science fair–like effects (recall DIY volcanoes?). Wait five minutes; run hot water.

10

SMELLY SNEAKERS
Freshen up after your workout by sprinkling baking soda inside your shoes (and your gym bag). Tap it out before you use them again.

11

DULL JEWELRY
When your silver stops shining, get rid of tarnish by making a paste (three parts baking soda to one part water). Apply it with a lint-free cloth (not a paper towel, which can scratch). Rinse.

12

DIRTY PATIO FURNITURE
Before you pull out your lawn chairs, wipe them with baking soda and water. And before you put them away at the end of the summer, place baking soda underneath the cushions or inside their storage bags to keep them fresh.

5 THINGS TO NEVER CLEAN WITH VINEGAR

GRANITE OR STONE FLOORS AND COUNTERS
The acid in vinegar can etch natural stone. Use a mild liquid dish detergent and warm water or a specialty stone cleaner.

AN EGG STAIN OR SPILL
If you drop an egg on the floor, don't reach for the vinegar. Just like when you poach an egg, the acidity can cause it to coagulate, making the egg more difficult to remove.

YOUR IRON
Vinegar can damage your iron's internal parts, so don't pour it through to freshen and clean it. Empty your iron completely after use and follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions to avoid clogging.

HARDWOOD FLOORS
The jury's still out on this one: Some homeowners find that vinegar solutions clean their sealed hardwood well; others say it damages the finish. Our advice? Use a cleaner specifically formulated for hardwood.

SOME STUBBORN STAINS
Blot, sponge and try as you might, grass, ink, ice cream and blood won't come out with vinegar alone. They tend to set into the fabric quickly or not respond to acid, so treat them with a prewash stain remover and launder with a detergent with enzymes (check the package — most stain-fighting detergents have them).

Text, Lauren Piro. Photograph, iStockphoto.

*

BEST CLEANERS FROM THE PANTRY

1. WHITE VINEGAR The pantry staple is perfect for windows (mix two tablespoons with a quart of water) or making hard-water stains history.

2. BAKING SODA It makes a great deodorizer and can be used to shine stainless steel sinks and appliances.

3. LEMONS Zap ’em in a bowl of water for a quick microwave clean, or use them to shine brass (mix with table salt and scrub!).

CLEANUP CALENDAR

Follow this guide to stay on top of the job without overdoing it

Daily

KITCHEN

☑ Dispose of trash and recyclables
☐ Hand-wash and -dry dishes or place them in the dishwasher (machine-wash them when a full load has accumulated)
☐ Wipe table, countertops and range top
☐ Wash coffeemaker thoroughly after each use
☐ Run food disposer and clean sink
☐ Sweep or vacuum floor; wipe up any spots with a damp paper towel

BATHROOMS

☐ Wipe fixtures, chrome and countertops
☐ Straighten towels
☐ Use a squeegee or daily shower cleaner to prevent streaks and soap-scum buildup

THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

☐ Put clothing, books, toys and other items where they belong
☐ Straighten living spaces and bedrooms
☐ Make beds
☐ Go through the mail; handle or recycle

Weekly

KITCHEN

☐ Clean range top and front, drip pans, control knobs and backsplash. Wipe down microwave oven, both inside and outside
☐ Organize refrigerator and wipe up spills; dispose of leftover foods that have spoiled
☐ Clean items on countertop; move them away from walls to wipe under and behind them
☐ Sweep or vacuum floor and wash it
☐ Wipe table and chairs

BATHROOMS

☐ Scrub bathtubs and sinks and wipe tile surfaces; clean toothbrush and soap holders
☐ Clean mirrors, shower stalls and doors and toilets
☐ Vacuum and wash floors

THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

☐ Dust furniture, mirrors, pictures, lamp bases and shades and electronics
☐ Vacuum floors, upholstery and woodwork
☐ Wipe smudges off walls and woodwork
☐ Empty wastepaper baskets; change bed linens
☐ Recycle or toss newspapers older than a week and magazines older than three months

Occasionally

KITCHEN

☐ Wipe refrigerator sides and top, and vacuum coils
☐ Wash refrigerator and freezer shelves and drawers as needed
☐ Wash ventilating fan/hood filters
☐ Thoroughly clean cabinets and drawers
☐ Dust or vacuum woodwork
☐ Wash curtains, windows, screens, blinds and shades
☐ Clean light fixtures
☐ Clean oven

BATHROOM

☐ Wash throw rugs and shower curtains
☐ Wash windows, blinds, shades or curtains
☐ Clean medicine cabinet and closets; discard medicines that have expired
☐ Clean light fixtures
☐ Dust or vacuum walls and woodwork

THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

☐ Vacuum curtains and radiators
☐ Wash windows
☐ Dust/vacuum walls, woodwork
☐ Clean light fixtures
☐ Move and clean under furniture
☐ Polish furniture
☐ Deep-clean rugs and carpets; clean bare floors and polish if needed
☐ Straighten closets; give away unneeded items
☐ Clean garage, basement and attic
☐ Clean humidifiers, dehumidifiers and fans
☐ Clean display cabinets, bookcases and contents of each

Text, Lauren Piro. Photograph, Getty Images.

CHAPTER 2

COMMON PROBLEMS

Tackle your toughest messes and trouble spots with our time-saving tricks and clutter-busting solutions.

Text, Alyssa Longobucco. Photograph, Getty Images.

THE ROAD
PILGRIMS IN PARADISE

7 MIN.

SPEED CLEANING

FAST FIXES FOR YOUR ENTRY

It's time to solve your family's "drop zone" problem once and for all

1

REMOVE THE MESS

Start by answering "Which shoes really need to be here right now?" Scoop up the rest, plus jackets, hats and anything else, into a bin, and deliver them to their owners' bedrooms — or better yet, ask said owners to collect the items themselves. **GH Tip:** If any of the outerwear needs a wash, run a load now. Next, grab a tote bag and fill it with newspapers, magazines or catalogs you want to keep; recycle the ones you'll never get to. Save a few papers for step 2.

2

DO SOME FOOTWORK

If shoes or boots are dirty or wet, use those salvaged newspaper sections as mats to soak up puddles and catch dirt. Also, crinkle some extra paper and stuff it inside soaked-through footwear — it will absorb odors and help shoes hold their shape. Like outerwear, remove any boots or shoes that are left over from the previous season.

3

FINISH WITH THE FLOOR

Dry dirt is easier to remove than sticky mud, so don't even bother cleaning until the footprints get dusty; then just open the back door and sweep it all out. Wash the floor the fast, no-bucket-necessary way, with either a water-dampened microfiber mop or an all-in-one mopping system. Zap any scuff marks as you go with a bit of baking soda on a damp sponge. Don't you feel better?

Make It Easier Next Time

HANG HOOKS so coats, keys and bags have an official spot. **USE BASKETS** to divvy up mail. **PUT OUT A BROWN PAPER BAG** for catalogs and newspapers — that way, the whole sack is recyclable. **ROLL OUT A LONG CARPET** or small area rug (preferably machine-washable) so muddy soles and wet umbrellas won't muck up the floor.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Jonny Valiant.

HOW TO KEEP FLOORS CLEAN LONGER

1. PLACE A BOOT TRAY BY THE DOOR
Remove shoes to keep tracked-in dirt and scuffs off floors.

2. VACUUM ABOUT ONCE A WEEK
You may think sweeping is the way to cut down on grime, but vacuuming is more thorough, not to mention more effortless, than using a broom and dustpan.

3. TACKLE SPILLS IMMEDIATELY
It's way easier to wipe a fresh puddle than to wait for it to dry on. You'll especially want to take care with porous surfaces like marble to avoid stains from soaking in

3 WAYS TO SPIFF UP WOOD FLOORS

Bring back the glow with these simple, speedy tips

1

RUB OUT SCUFFS
Rubber soles and heels can wreak havoc on wood floors. Fortunately, scuff marks usually "sit" on top of a floor's finish, so they're easy to remove. If the mark is light, simply rub it with a sock—like the one on your foot (no bending down required)—or a clean tennis ball. For more stubborn marks, apply baking soda to a damp cloth and gently rub the scuff until it disappears. Wipe with a clean, damp cloth, and buff dry.

2

CLEAR THE WAY
If there's a dull path down the floor's center "traffic lane," it needs deeper cleaning. For a sparkling finish, use a product that's formulated for wood. Start by lightly spritzing a 3′-by-3′ area with the cleaner. Then go over it with a damp microfiber cloth or mop; let dry. Repeat this process until the floor is clean (so, if you don't need to mop in some spots, don't bother), rinsing the cloth or mop often.

3

SHOO AWAY GOO
To safely remove tacky messes like tar and gum, place a few ice cubes in a plastic bag and hold this on the clump to harden it. Then, with a credit card or plastic spatula, gently scrape off. For dried paint splatters, moisten a cloth with a little rubbing alcohol, place it on the stain for a few seconds and use your scraper tool to dislodge the blob. Follow up by rubbing with the baking soda from step 1; rinse and buff dry.

5 MISTAKES THAT RUIN WOOD FLOORS

1 VACUUMING WITH A ROTATING BRUSH
This can be very abrasive to wood floors. Use a floor brush attachment on a canister vacuum instead, or switch off the brush on an upright. Try to vacuum often—dirt and dust can scratch your floor when they sit for too long and get ground in.

2 WET-CLEANING TOO OFTEN
Unless your wood floors get tons of foot traffic, you don't need to wet-clean them more than once every two to three months.

3 DRENCHING THE FLOOR WITH CLEANER
Today's wood flooring finishes are more resistant to water than ones in the past, but you still shouldn't flood your floors. Tackle small areas at a time with a damp (not wet) mop or cloth and dry them promptly.

4 USING STEAM WILLY-NILLY
Exercise caution when using steam cleaners. If your floor has a wax finish or if its finish is old and worn, skip the steam. For other finishes, make sure the floor is intact before breaking out the steamer. Use the lightest level of steam your appliance offers and keep it moving across the floor, not stationary in any one spot for too long.

5 CHOOSING THE WRONG RUG PAD
Rubber-backed mats or rubber mesh pads can dull your floor's shine and even cause discoloration. To protect your floor while keeping your area rugs in place, use a combination felt and rubber pad.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Mellemrum/GAP Interiors.

5 BIGGEST MISTAKES YOU MAKE WHEN YOU DUST

It may feel like a losing battle, but there are a few tricks to keep that dust from coming back so quickly

1

USING A FEATHER DUSTER

If you take away one lesson from this book, let this be it. A feather duster simply spreads dust from one surface to another. Instead, select microfiber dusters or electrostatic dusters that grab and hold on to dust. And to ensure that they continue to pick up dust, wash or replace them when they get dirty.

2

OVERLOOKING HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING VENTS

These invisible grilles on your walls and ceilings are hidden dust magnets. Forget to clean them and the air blowing through them can wind up back in your room. With your vacuum's soft brush attachment, take a minute to go over the slats whenever you see dust accumulating on them.

3

SPRAYING POLISH DIRECTLY ON FURNITURE

Do this and you risk forming a filmy buildup on your wood that is difficult to remove and ultimately attracts more dust. Instead, spray your cloth and pass it gently across the furniture's surface. If you prefer to spray your furniture, do so lightly and, after you dust, buff again with a clean cloth to remove any polish residue.

4

DRY DUSTING

When dust is dry, it easily becomes airborne and is harder to gather and remove. Spritz microfiber dusters and cloths with a dusting spray or polish for easier cleaning and better results.

5

FORGETTING TO CHANGE OR CLEAN YOUR VACUUM'S FILTERS

Vacuum cleaner filters are designed to capture the fine dust and particles the vacuum collects. Clogged filters can't trap this dust and may cause the vacuum to spew it back into the air. It's important to replace or wash any filters as often as the manufacturer recommends.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Adobe Stock.

3 GENIUS FOOD TRICKS

Yes, you can clean with food. For real!

1. UNGUNK WOOD COUNTERS

The coarse texture of table salt can erase stains from butcher-block countertop (and help release stuck-on food from your cast-iron skillet, too).

2. ELIMINATE WATER RINGS FROM WOOD

To get rid of water stains, dry the area and put on enough mayo (not the low-fat kind) to cover the spot. Let sit for several hours — it'll be gone within the day. Not into using food? Place a towel on top and press with a warm, dry iron for five to 10 seconds.

3. NIX FURNITURE NICKS

To hide scratches in wood, crack open a fresh walnut, then rub the meat over the nick in the direction of the grain. Buff with a clean, soft cloth.

5 MIN.

SPEED CLEANING

HOW TO CLEAN BLINDS AND SHADES

Here’s how to keep all kinds of window treatments looking their best. (Just one caveat: Delicate fabrics like silk are better left to the pros.)

1

ALUMINUM AND VINYL BLINDS
Lower blind and tilt the slats down, but don’t close them completely, or each slat won’t get entirely cleaned. With your hand on the bottom rail, pull the blind slightly away from the window, keeping it taut. Attach the soft dusting-brush tool to your vacuum cleaner and vacuum a few slats at a time. Going side to side works very well, but so does a top-to-bottom motion; choose what works best for you. Dampen a microfiber cloth with water and wipe slats again. Do an extra pass over any stubborn dirt. Open slats and allow blind to air-dry.

2

VINYL AND FABRIC SHADES
Vacuum fabric shades, like honeycomb and Roman styles, as you would blinds, with the soft brush or upholstery tool. For vinyl roller shades, pull them about halfway down to start to make work more manageable. Dip a cloth in sudsy water, wring it out and wipe the vinyl shade in horizontal sections, starting at the bottom and wiping up and down or left to right. Focus on fingerprints at the edges. Rinse cloth, wring well and wipe off the section you’re working on. Continue upward, pulling shade down as you go. Leave the shade extended until dry.

3

FOR WINDOWS
Use white vinegar to brighten your windows. Mix two tablespoons white vinegar with one quart water (add more vinegar for very dirty windows), and dispense into a spray bottle. Squirt on and wipe away with a clean microfiber cloth (not paper towels, which can leave lint and streaks behind).
GH Tip: Use a hairdryer on the Cool setting to remove dirt from screens. You can also blowdry dust off figurines and frames (vacuum or sweep floors afterward).

Make It Easier Next Time

CLEAN WITH MICROFIBER GLOVES—they can be used wet or dry and allow you to reach both sides at one time. **SPRAY FABRIC BLINDS AND SHADES** with an anti-static product to repel dust. **HANG WASHABLE CURTAINS** over blinds and shades to keep dust from settling on them.

Text, Carolyn Forté.

5 WAYS TO CLEAN UP PET PROBLEMS — FAST!

Because owning a four-legged friend shouldn't mean your home stinks

1

REMOVE FUR FROM FLOORS

Spritz carpeting with anti-static spray. Set your vacuum's rotating brush to the highest level that still skims the carpet, and go over the trail your pet has left. For fluffy tufts on bare floors, use a dry sweeper. In a rush? Scoop up clumps in corners and around furniture legs with a damp paper towel. If your pet brings in mud, fight the urge to scrub the spots right away: Mud will be easier to vacuum away when dry. Blot whatever remains with dish liquid mixed with warm water.

2

STOP STAINS

On non-washable fabrics, remove fresh stains by sponging with a vinegar solution (1 tablespoon vinegar to 2 cups water). Dried stains should be cleaned professionally. On washable fabrics, rinse the stained area with cold water, then soak overnight in a solution of biological detergent. Machine-wash as normal.

3

ORGANIZE THEIR FOOD

If dry kibbles in a paper bag keep spilling, repackage them in a jumbo plastic container with a lid. If you're concerned about ants getting into their food, try this DIY solution: Flip the bowl upside down and dab some petroleum jelly near the base. Ants won't be able to climb over it to approach the food.

4

FIGHT STINK

Deodorize soft places (including the dog bed) by sprinkling surfaces with baking soda, letting sit for 15 minutes and vacuuming it up. Scoop kitty's clumps out of the box and shake baking soda over remaining litter. For Fido's pad, cover with a thin layer of baking soda, let sit for five minutes, then clean with a handheld vacuum. **GH Tip:** Lessen sofa odor by slipping dryer sheets into envelopes and tucking them under the cushions.

5

COLLECT FUR ON FURNITURE

The reason fur clings to upholstery: static electricity. Liberally spray furniture with an antistatic spray. Then put on a clean pair of rubber gloves, lightly dampen them with water and run gloved hands over cushions (for silk, use dry gloves). Or, after you're through washing dishes, don't remove your damp gloves—take a detour through the living room and quickly pick up errant fur. Wipe hair clumps from the gloves with a moist towel.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Bjorn Wallander.

3 WAYS TO ORGANIZE KID STUFF

How to take your kids' rooms from chaotic to collected

1

TACKLE THEIR PLAYTHINGS
Store toys, collectibles and crafts on open-display shelving like the unit designed by a carpenter for this room (*opposite*). Your child will have easy access to favorites, and it'll double as wall art. No budget for a carpenter? Don't underestimate the power of a few good bins. Remind kids they have to refill the tub when they're done playing.

2

ADD BEDSIDE STORAGE
Kids need nightstands, too! Choose one with a drawer for stashing small items as well as storage for favorite reads. Top it with a reading lamp and a few trays to keep knickknacks streamlined.

3

TRY THE HULA HOOP TRICK
Meet your new secret weapon to get kids to put away their stuff, courtesy of Leslie Josel, creator of the consulting firm Order Out of Chaos. Toss a hula hoop on the floor and challenge them to pick up everything inside the ring and return it to its proper place—designated bins make it easy for little ones to know where things go. Keep tossing till the floor is clear.

3 TRICKS TO ERASE MESS

1

BANISH MARKS FROM COLORING TIME
Use toothpaste to erase marker stains from wood—a handy trick to have in your back pocket if you've got creative kids.

2

WIPE OUT WALL DOODLES
When your child's artistic efforts end up all over the wall, scrub lightly with a damp sponge sprinkled with baking soda.

3

FRESHEN STUFFED ANIMALS
Between baths (through the washing machine), groom kids' plush playthings by giving them a quick once-over with a lint roller.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Lisa Romerein. Interior design, Meta Coleman.

The Wizard of Oz

5 BIGGEST MISTAKES YOU MAKE VACUUMING

It isn’t rocket science (thank goodness!), but a little extra know-how can help you clean your home that much better

1

WAITING FOR A FULL BAG TO EMPTY IT

Even though some vacs have “check bag” indicator lights, check the bag yourself and change it when it’s three-quarters full. This keeps suction strong. And if you have a bagless vac, don’t forget the dust cup—dirt collects there, too. We recommend cleaning it after every two to three uses.

2

USING A VACUUM WITH A DIRTY FILTER

You won’t effectively remove allergens if your filter is clogged. You don’t have to change the filter as often as the bag, but if the filter shows signs of wear, or if it’s very dirty or torn, replace it. Change HEPA filters every six months or with every sixth bag change. Check the owner’s manual.

3

NOT USING THE ATTACHMENTS

Dusting brushes and crevice tools are your best friends! They make above-the-floor cleaning much easier and pick up dust and allergens from areas you might otherwise overlook, like upholstery, light fixtures, baseboards and lampshades.

4

REWINDING YOUR RETRACTABLE CORD WITHOUT GUIDING IT

Merely pressing the rewind button and letting the cord snap in might send it off its track (which requires a service repair to fix). Instead, hold the cord in your hand as you press the pedal to wind it back onto the reel.

5

NOT CUTTING OUT HAIR OR STRING

A brush roll that doesn’t turn doesn’t clean—it’s that simple. Worse, the stress of tangled hair and threads can burn out the motor (not a cheap repair). To prevent this, unwind or snip away any tangles. Most vacuums have a brush roll that you can easily remove for more thorough cleaning.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Getty Images.

CHAPTER 3

KITCHEN

Get our top tricks to keep your appliances looking (and performing) as good as new. Plus, easy ways to whip this space into shape — all before dinnertime.

Text, Alyssa Longobucco. Photograph, Lisa Romerein. Interior design, Meta Coleman.

30 MIN.

SPEED CLEANING

FAST FIXES FOR A SPARKLING KITCHEN

Follow these shortcuts to tackle the mess in your cooking zone

1

CLEAR THE COUNTER

Stash mail, papers and rarely used small appliances (like your juicer) in designated drawers or cupboards. Then toss unwanted food items that have been left sitting out. Use a disinfectant spray to wipe the surface.

2

PURGE THE FRIDGE

Pull the trash can over and dump leftovers, spoiled food and old condiment bottles. Wipe shelves, bins and the front door and handle with a wet cloth or sponge. Add a fresh box of baking soda to absorb odors.

3

SPOT-CLEAN THE STOVE

Take care of stovetop spills and grease on the door handle or inside the glass door with a wet sponge and a dash of baking soda (easier to rinse off than a sudsy cleaner). Wipe up any food crumbs, then liberally spritz burned-on food with ammonia from a spray bottle. Rinse well with warm water. Then sprinkle on some baking soda and add just a few drops of white vinegar. Let it bubble for a minute or two, then whisk away the grime with a scrub sponge.

4

LOAD THE DISHWASHER

Stop pretending you're going to rinse those dishes piling up on the counter—load them into the dishwasher. Run some water over drippy detergent bottles, then stick those, pot scrubbers and rubber gloves under the sink. When all has been relocated, use a sponge around the bowl of the basin and over the faucet if you've splattered water in your speediness.

5

GRAB THE MOP

Use a sweeper with disposable cloths to pick up crumbs, dust and hair from the floor. **GH Tip:** Keep a damp paper towel in one hand to zap stains so you don't have to stop as you go. Throw the used sweeper sheet and paper towel in your trash bin.

Expert Advice

Q. HOW OFTEN SHOULD I USE MY OVEN'S SELF-CLEANING CYCLE?

A. Whenever it looks dirty—otherwise, baked-on spills will smoke and smell during cleaning. Just before a major holiday is an ideal time to do this so odors won't bother guests. If you're worried it's dangerous because of the high temps, don't be: It's safe. And it's a no-brainer—no oven cleaner or elbow grease needed.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Lincoln Barbour.

DEEP CLEANING
Do these tough jobs every six to 12 months

1. **WASH** and degrease the range hood.
2. **REMOVE** and clean all shelves and bins inside your fridge.
3. **WIPE** the walls and cabinets, inside and out.
4. **VACUUM** or dust vents and disinfect switch plates.
5. **SWEEP** or wipe ceiling fans and light fixtures.

HOW TO ZAP KITCHEN ODORS

Because the lingering scent of last night's broiled fish is just not appetizing

1

COMBAT COOKING FUMES

In a saucepan, mix three tablespoons of white vinegar and one cup of water; boil for several minutes. Vinegar is acidic and odors are alkaline, so the former will neutralize the latter. **GH Tip:** After slicing onions or mincing garlic, neutralize smelly hands by rubbing fingers on a stainless steel spoon under running water.

2

TREAT THE TRASH

Empty the can and use a wet paper towel to wipe away any debris stuck inside or under the lid. Spray the whole thing, inside and out, with a disinfectant spray and let it dry—do this weekly, and you may be able to skip a deeper cleaning for good. **GH Tip:** Tuck a woodsy-scented sachet in the bottom; the blend of plant extracts will fight odors for weeks.

3

FRESHEN UP APPLIANCES

Remove food particles from the dishwasher filter (below the bottom rack) with a paper towel. Then run a Rinse Only or Quick Rinse cycle with the machine empty, to wash away debris; afterward, leave the door a bit ajar to air it out. Empty the fridge, toss past-their-prime leftovers and other likely offenders and dump the old ice cubes, which hold odors, in the sink. Clean obvious spills with a sudsy sponge; rinse. Pour a thin ([illegible]-inch) layer of fresh baking soda into a few small, shallow dishes. Cover with plastic wrap and punch holes so air can circulate; distribute on shelves to freshen for up to three months.

4

RINSE THE SINK

The culprit here is residual food scraps in the garbage disposer or pipes. First, clean the disposer blades by grinding up ice from the freezer. Thoroughly rinse the rubber gasket, if you have one—it's a magnet for debris (flip it up and get the underside, too). Finally, even if you don't have a disposer, pour [illegible] cup baking soda down the drain while running warm tap water.

5 WAYS TO GET RID OF FRUIT FLIES

Take back your fruit bowl with these clever strategies

APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Remove the cap from the bottle (it doesn't have to be full—nearly empty works, too). Cover the opening with plastic wrap and secure with a rubber band. Then poke a hole for fruit flies to enter. They can't resist the scent of vinegar, and they won't be able to exit once they're inside.

VINEGAR AND DISH SOAP

Add three drops of dish soap to a bowl of vinegar and leave it uncovered. The soap cuts the surface tension of the vinegar so the flies will sink and drown.

PAPER CONE AND FRUIT

Place a little vinegar and a chunk of very ripe fruit in a jar. Then roll a piece of paper into a cone and stick it into the jar, narrow opening downward. Fruit flies will be drawn in but won't be able to get out.

RED WINE

Fruit flies love the sweetness of wine. Try leaving out a bottle with a little liquid left—the skinny neck will trap the flies.

AUNT FANNIE'S FLY PUNCH

This mixture's active ingredients are sodium lauryl sulfate and malic acid, and it comes in a stand-up pouch. All you have to do is rip off the top, set it on your counter and "count the bodies" (Aunt Fannie has a bit of a sharp tongue). Sabina Burdzovic, a chemist in the GH Institute's Health, Beauty and Environmental Sciences Lab, says it works better in her home than other remedies she's tried. *auntfannies.com*

Text, Carolyn Forté, Lauren Piro (5 Ways to Get Rid of Fruit Flies). Photograph, Mike Garten. Interior design, Ingrid Leess.

WEIMAN STAINLESS STEEL CLEANER & POLISH

Love stainless steel but not the fingerprints it seems to attract? Yeah, us, too. For an easy-to-use cleaner, we like this aerosol formula, which lifts dirt and resists most print marks.

SPEED CLEANING

REFRESH STAINLESS STEEL APPLIANCES

1

GRAB YOUR GLASS-AND-SURFACE CLEANER
Wet a soft microfiber cloth. Lightly spritz handles and areas where you see the most smudges. Or, try a specialty product made for stainless steel surfaces.

2

WIPE THE APPLIANCE'S SURFACE IN ONE DIRECTION
Go with the metal's grain, adding more cleaner if needed. Target areas behind the handles and around knobs. Avoid wiping in circles, as this will cause streaking. Buff with a clean part of the cloth.

3

RUB WITH MINERAL OIL
With a paper towel, apply a thin coat of mineral oil to the surfaces you're cleaning — it will help minimize future fingerprints if your cleaner doesn't already have a protectant built into the formula.

TIDY UP INSIDE THE FRIDGE

1

TAKE EVERYTHING OUT
This includes all removable shelves and bins. Wipe dried food from any condiment bottles. Toss perishable foods that are past their prime.

2

WASH BINS AND SHELVES
Clean them in the sink with warm, soapy water and a sponge; towel off or air-dry. Fill a bucket with more soapy water; sponge the inside and wipe the gasket around the door. For glued-on gunk, soak a paper towel in hot water and place on crud for a few minutes to soften; wipe and toss. Dry with a soft cloth. Reinsert shelves.

3

PUT FOOD BACK
Sort it by use and designate shelves accordingly (one for leftovers, one for meal prep and ingredients, one for snacks, etc.). This makes items easier to find and gives you a visual clue as to when you're running low on something. Move perishables to the front so you'll eat them before they spoil.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Stacey Brandford. Interior Design, Sarah Richardson.

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR RANGE HOOD

Easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. REMOVE only the large metal mesh filter (a.k.a. the part that gets the gunkiest) and swish it in a sink filled with warm water and dish soap.

2. DIP a cloth in the same soapy water and clean the exterior surface only (including the lightbulb, if exposed) and knobs and switches.

3. RINSE everything you just wiped with a cloth dipped in clear water. Carefully replace mesh filter once it's totally dry.

HOW TO GET MORE OOMPH OUT OF YOUR DISHWASHER

These cleaning and loading tricks will make you fall in love with your machine all over again

1

TURN ON THE HOT WATER AT THE SINK BEFORE YOU USE THE DISHWASHER
It helps purge the cold water from your line and ensures that hot water is entering the dishwasher so you'll get the best cleaning.

2

RUN A CYCLE WITH VINEGAR
You need to de-gunk your dishwasher every now and then. Place a large glass measuring cup filled with two cups of vinegar on the bottom rack, then run the machine as usual — no detergent, no heated dry. The vinegar will mix with the water as it circulates, which will help with deep-cleaning.

3

CLEAN OUT HOLES IN THE SPRAY ARM WITH WIRE
The vinegar trick should help unclog these tiny openings, but stubborn debris might require an extra push. Use sturdy wire — like the kind you might use to hang a picture frame — to clear 'em out. Then remove any crud that may be left on the bottom.

4

GRAB AN OLD TOOTHBRUSH FOR THE NITTY-GRITTY
Don't toss that used toothbrush into the garbage — it's actually one of the best cleaning tools for your dishwasher. Use the bristly end to scrub off buildup and navigate crevices in your filter.

5

PRETREAT SUPER-GRIMY DISHWARE
Just like you do with super-soiled laundry, you can give crusty casseroles a little extra squirt of detergent before loading them onto the rack to help improve cleaning. Use the detergent meant for dishwashers, not hand-washing, or you might end up with a sudsy mess.

6

ORGANIZE SILVERWARE BEFORE LOADING
Flip forks so they face upward, and alternate spoons so half face up and half face down. Keep all knives facing down. If your dishwasher has a top tray for flatware, use the slots to keep items organized.

7

BE STRATEGIC WITH DISHES
Nestle glasses between tines — otherwise, drops may dry where tines touch them, and glasses can shift around and crack. Load dishes with the dirty sides facing the center, where spray is strongest. Put platters along sides or back of rack.

8

UNLOAD THE BOTTOM RACK FIRST
This helps prevent water that's sitting in cups or glasses on the top rack from spilling down and getting your dried dishes wet again.

9

DON'T FORGET ABOUT ALL THE OTHER THINGS YOU CAN CLEAN IN YOUR DISHWASHER
You can use the normal cycle with the heated dry setting to kill bacteria on sponges, rid plastic toys (like action figures or Legos) of germs before a playdate and so much more.

Text, Lauren Smith. Photograph, Getty Images.

CHAPTER 4

BATHROOM

It's one of the most important rooms to keep clean in your home, and also one of the most difficult. Here's how to get more mileage out of your efforts and help this high-traffic room stay fresh longer.

Text, Alyssa Longobucco. Photograph, Getty Images.

15 MIN.

SPEED CLEANING

HOW TO MAKE YOUR BATHROOM SHINE

1

HANG A PLASTIC BAG ON THE DOORKNOB

Use it to toss the cleaning cloths you're about to use and for emptying the wastebasket — the easiest insta-tidy trick. Next, grab some bleach. Pour a cup into the toilet bowl; brush around the sides and under the rim. Then move on to the next task for five minutes.

2

SPRAY SOAP SCUM CLEANER

While the bleach is working, fill a spray bottle with equal parts water and white vinegar (or better yet, keep a labeled bottle for this occasion). Spritz onto paper towels or a microfiber cloth, and zero in on those telltale soap drips and toothpaste spatters on faucets, countertops and in the sink. Give spotty shower doors the same spray treatment.

3

WIPE AROUND THE TROUBLE SPOTS

Flip over one of those same vinegar wipes and run it across the back of your dusty toilet tank, then over, under and around the seat. Flush the bleach that's been sitting in the bowl, toss the wipe into your doorknob bag and move on.

4

PUT OUT FRESH TOWELS

Instead of scooping up all used bath towels, just put out fresh hand towels — those are the ones short-term guests use anyway. Leave the others on the bar; just straighten them. If you have linen spray, mist them. If you don't, a light body spray or perfume will do the trick.

5

MAKE FAUCETS AND MIRRORS GLEAM

Wipe a bit of rubbing alcohol over your bathroom fixtures with a wet sponge or cloth to get gunk off chrome. Clean the mirror with coffee filters; they're lint-free, so you can swap them out for paper towels to give mirrors a no-streak shine.

6

SHAKE OUT YOUR RUG OR BATH MAT

Fluff it up so it looks recently vacuumed. Next, with a dampened paper towel, swoosh the room's corners, where most hair and dust collects. And don't forget to take the plastic bag with you when you leave!

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Lisa Romerein. Interior design, Becki Owens.

DEEP CLEANING

Do these tough jobs every three to six months

1. WASH shower curtain and wipe shower rod.

2. WIPE drains and overflow holes with a vinegar-dipped cotton swab to zap minerals.

3. SPRAY or wipe out the inside and outside of the wastebasket with a disinfectant.

4. WIPE OUT your medicine cabinet, and wipe down walls and disinfect switch plates.

6. SWEEP or wipe the ceiling and light fixtures. Dust or vacuum air vents.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR BATHROOM CLEAN LONGER

Because scrubbing tile is low on the list of things you want to do this weekend

1

SQUEEGEE YOUR SHOWER

Nothing helps delay mildew stains like a dry shower. Hang a squeegee from the shower head, and make it a rule that the last one to take a shower wipes down the walls, tub and shower doors. A couple extra minutes of work can really minimize cleaning time in the long run.

2

STASH A CANISTER OF DISINFECTING CLEANING WIPES UNDER THE SINK

This way, you can quickly wipe up toothpaste splatters, water marks and other messes when you see them, and they won't have a chance to dry and become tougher to remove.

3

COMBAT SHOWER CURTAIN BUILDUP

Spritz the bottom of a vinyl shower-curtain liner several times a month with a bleach-containing all-purpose or bathroom cleaner to keep soap scum, water minerals and mildew at bay. Just let the shower rinse it off (before you hop in) and you won't need to launder the curtain as often.

4

CREATE ORDER IN YOUR CABINETS

If you dedicate spots for cosmetics and hair tools in your medicine cabinet or vanity, they can be stashed away but remain within reach. A clutter-free counter instantly makes a bathroom look and feel cleaner. Shed packaging, and store products in jars and baskets.

5

INSTALL AMPLE TOWEL BARS

Towels will dry more quickly and your bathroom will look tidier when you hang them where they can air-dry. No wall space? Consider an over-the-door towel bar.

6

COAT SHOWER WALLS AND DOORS WITH A WATER REPELLENT

They help water, minerals and soap scum bead up and run off, so there's less for you to scrub away.

7

SKIP BAR SOAP AT THE SINK

Use a liquid soap with a pump or even a hands-free soap dispenser instead. Eliminating the grimy soap dish will help your sink and countertop stay goop-free.

8

KEEP A STASH OF USED DRYER SHEETS NEARBY

You can use them to quickly and easily nab hair and dust bunnies from the floor without dragging out the vacuum cleaner.

ULTRA SPEED CLEANING

1. IF YOU HAVE 2 SECONDS
Wipe away any toothpaste globs with a tissue, so they don't harden and make for more work later.

2. IF YOU HAVE 5 SECONDS
Stretch out the shower curtain after a shower to help it dry out faster to keep mildew at bay.

3. IF YOU HAVE 30 SECONDS
Squeegee the walls of your shower after using it—which means you'll need to scrub the walls far less often.

Text, Lauren Piro. Photograph, Lisa Romerein. Interior design, Becki Owens.

5 ORGANIZING ESSENTIALS YOUR BATHROOM NEEDS

Maximize storage (no matter how limited your space is) with these clever solutions

1

USE CLEAR, STACKABLE BINS
End the *Hmmm...what did I put in there?* mystery with lidded canisters in see-through acrylic. This multi-compartment transparent organizer herds together all those smaller, oddly shaped toiletries.

2

PUT UP SOME SHELVES
Compact but strong—a pretty, powder-coated iron shelf turns dead wall space into a smart storage spot.

3

ADD DRAWERS UNDER THE SINK
If your vanity doesn't have drawers, add some. Smooth-gliding steel mesh drawers restore order and accessibility. Label each drawer so you know where everything is and where it should be returned when you're done with it.

4

GET A DOOR CADDY
Make better use of the space on the back of the door by using an over-the-door organizing solution with slots for a hairdryer nozzle and cords.

5

GET RID OF EXPIRED MEDS
Safely dispose of old medication: Find instructions on the label, or visit fda.gov for info. Some local police departments also sponsor the collection of expired meds.

Expert Advice

STORE YOUR PLUNGER IN A FLOWERPOT
Keep a pretty pot with a saucer in the bathroom for holding the toilet plunger. It's an easy way to collect drips and easier to clean than some caddies.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Tessa Neustadt. Interior design, Amber Lewis.

5 CLEANING TOOLS TO KEEP IN THE BATHROOM

1. SQUEEGEE It's the best way to beat buildup from soap scum.

2. BLEACH PEN Use it to stop mold or mildew patches in their tracks.

3. TOUCH-UP CLEANER Stash some disinfectant wipes for quick sanitizing.

4. LINT-FREE WIPE Get streak-free mirrors—zero glass cleaner required—with a reusable microfiber cloth.

5. TOILET GEL Place an automatic toilet cleaner inside the bowl then dispense one dose of gel so it clings to the inside surface of the bowl to clean and freshen with each flush.

8 MISTAKES YOU MAKE IN THE BATHROOM

You're probably on autopilot when it comes to your bathroom routine, but take care you're not making these icky oopsies

1 YOU DON'T SHUT THE TOILET LID WHEN YOU FLUSH

If you leave the lid up when you flush, germy water particles (and, err, whatever else is in the toilet) can spray across the room—up to six feet away from the toilet. This fact was first discussed in a 1975 study completed by germ expert Dr. Charles Gerba, and it has been proven time and again. He and his team found that bacteria can linger in the air long enough to settle in a filthy film all around the room—so make sure everyone in your household is onboard with a lid-down flushing protocol.

2 YOU STORE YOUR TOOTHBRUSH IN THE MEDICINE CABINET

You might think this a clever way to keep toilet bacteria from reaching your brush, but you could be trading one ill-advised move for another. Trapped in a cabinet or container, your brush may not be able to dry between uses, creating a welcome environment for bacteria. The American Dental Association recommends storing toothbrushes in an upright position, and not letting them touch other brushes, to mitigate the risk of cross-contamination. And shut that toilet lid!

3 YOU LEAVE MAKEUP AND BRUSHES ON THE COUNTER

Anything you apply to your face should be kept out of the path of toilet germs, too. Plus, if you store your makeup in your bathroom, the room's moisture can make it even more susceptible to bacteria growth. Keep beauty supplies out of grime's way in drawers or boxes, and clean brushes and replace makeup as necessary.

4 YOU LET TOWELS DRY ON HOOKS

Laundering your bath towels after every three uses is a good rule of thumb, but only if you hang them spread out to dry on a towel bar. If you hang them on hooks, moisture (and any excess soap that's collected) can stay trapped between the folds, which could lead to mildew and bacteria growth.

5 YOU USE YOUR LOOFAH FOR WAY TOO LONG

Bacteria just loves breeding on these fluffy mesh shower staples, designed to hold in soap and water to help you lather up. Rinse well after use and hang dry. Toss them every three to four weeks.

6 YOU NEVER RUN THE FAN

Bathroom moisture can cause a host of yucky issues. So run the fan or open a window (or do both!) while you shower and for 15 to 20 minutes afterward.

7 YOU DON'T CLEAN THE SHOWER CURTAIN

Don't neglect this unassuming item. Feeling lazy about scrubbing residue away? Good news: You can usually toss shower curtains in the washing machine (even plastic liners on the delicate cycle). To keep mildew at bay for longer, pull the curtain across your tub (not scrunched to one side) between showers so it can air-dry thoroughly.

8 YOU USE YOUR CELL PHONE IN THE BATHROOM

If you catch up on Instagram or check text messages while sitting on the toilet, consider this: Anything you take into the bathroom can get contaminated with lingering germs or fecal matter (16% of cell phones are, according to one study). And even if you wash your hands after every bathroom break, we're guessing you don't also disinfect your phone… and then you put it to your face when your mom calls later. Ew.

Expert Advice

HOW TO GET RID OF MILDEW ON PAINT

Clear out the shower curtain, bath mat and towels (to avoid stains from bleach splashes). Put on rubber gloves and goggles, mix up a bucket of one cup chlorine bleach and one gallon warm water, and test for discoloration in a hidden spot. If OK, dip in a brush and scrub area; let sit 10 minutes. Rinse with a well-wrung cloth.

Text, Lauren Piro. Photograph, Mel Yates/Time Inc. UK.

SPEED CLEANING

ORGANIZING YOUR LINEN CLOSET

The most cluttered spot in your home is about to become the tidiest (really)

1

MAP OUT SHELVES

By designating each shelf to a different cause (first-aid supplies, clean towels), you'll always know where to look for the cold medicine when you start to get the sniffles or guest towels when your family is staying over.

2

ADD TOWEL BARS TO THE DOOR

Stash a couple sets of ready-to-grab towels on the inside of your closet door to make it easy for guests or young kids to find the ones they can use for their next shower.

3

OPTIMIZE YOUR TOWEL FOLDING

Not all shelves are the same — some are deeper, while others are wider. So if you fold towels to match the shelves they sit on, they're way less likely to topple over onto the floor when someone pulls one from the pile.

4

USE HOME-OFFICE ACCESSORIES

A file sorter fits onto most shelves and immediately creates stackable compartments for washcloths — no need to worry about toppling.

5

STASH SHEETS IN PILLOWCASES

This nifty hack makes it easier to keep all the pieces of your bedding set together and substantially lowers your chances of losing a rogue pillowcase.

6

ROLL YOUR TOWELS

Want to make your closet even more efficient? Roll fluffy towels so that they're easier to grab without messing up your stack — this is super-handy if you have younger kids.

Text, Lauren Smith. Photograph, Veer.

MAKE IT EASIER NEXT TIME

SORT BEDDING BY ROOM
Group similar-size sheets together so the right set will be easier to find when you're making the beds.

FIGHT MUSTY SMELLS
Just like in the fridge, an open box of baking soda placed near your sheets and towels can prevent a dank linen closet.

KEEP TOWELS SEPARATE
You wouldn't use bath, beach and hand towels interchangeably, so they shouldn't get thrown into one basket. Give them their own spots so ones you use less often will be out of the way.

CHAPTER 5

BEDROOM

Create a streamlined sanctuary with fast fixes for a tidy space, genius closet solutions and easy tricks for a prettier bed.

Text, Alyssa Longobucco. Photograph, Ashlee Raubach. Interior design, Becki Owens.

Expert Advice

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR BEDDING CLEANING. You need to clean pillows and comforters only two or three times a year. Easy reminder: Wash them when the seasons change.

SPEED CLEANING

FAST FIXES FOR A SPOTLESS BEDROOM

1

PUT EVERYTHING AWAY

Start by putting away any clothing or shoes littering the room and taking any dirty items down to the hamper. Put away any loose jewelry lying around and remove books, magazines, cups, glasses and any other items cluttering surfaces that don't belong on them.

2

MAKE THE BED

It's best to do this before any dusting and vacuuming so you aren't generating dust that will fall on clean surfaces. Fluff any decorative pillows. Spray a cloth with furniture polish and wipe the tops of night tables and dressers, lamps and the wooden headboard and footboard, if you have them. Straighten up items that stay out on display.

3

HIT THE FLOORS

Vacuum the carpet or flooring around the bed and furniture, starting at the far corner of the room and working your way backward out the door.

FRESHEN UP THE GUEST ROOM

1

CLEAR THE CLOSET

Take 10 hangers from the middle of the closet and relocate them to another room. Add fresh hangers to the cleared space. Empty the contents of the top dresser drawer into a box and slip it under the bed. Set a pretty dish on the nightstand to hold jewelry and loose change.

2

DRESS THE BED

Pop pillows into the dryer on the no-heat setting for 10 minutes to remove dust and fluff them. Replace the winter comforter with a lighter blanket. As you make up the bed, spritz some linen spray on the fitted sheet.

3

"FLUFF" EVERYWHERE

Turn on the lights and pull up the blinds so you can see where dust has settled. Use a microfiber cloth to whisk furniture, lamp bases, the headboard and any pictures or mirrors. Zap dangling cobwebs with a long-handled duster. Empty the wastebasket. Vacuum the middle of the room, where dirt is most obvious.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Kat Teutsch. Interior design, Sarah Richardson.

MAKE IT EASIER NEXT TIME

1. USE A wrinkle releaser-fabric softener combo to smooth linens and make them smell fresh in one step.

2. BETWEEN GUEST VISITS, keep the door closed so the guest room doesn't turn into your favorite dumping ground.

3. INVEST IN an over-the-door clothes hook so guests will have a place to hang garments without disturbing your things.

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR PILLOWS

If it's been more than six months since you've done so, it's time to give them a bath

1

DOWN AND FIBERFILL PILLOWS

Good news! You can clean these kinds of pillows in your washer. For best results, we recommend washing two at a time (to help keep the washer balanced) and using a front- or top-loading machine without an agitator. If an agitator-style top loader is your only option, place the pillows in the tub vertically so they'll be less likely to get wrapped around the agitator and damaged by it.

2

IF YOUR PILLOW HAS A CARE LABEL...

...definitely read that and follow its directions. If not, or if you've clipped off the tag, use warm water and opt for the gentle cycle. It's also a good idea to add on an extra cold-water rinse and spin. Tumble-dry the pillows on low heat, fluffing and turning them often. **GH Tip:** Toss in a few rubber dryer balls (clean tennis balls will do in a pinch) to help plump up the filling and keep it from clumping as it dries.

3

FOAM PILLOWS

Unfortunately, you can't put foam pillows into the washing machine, but if they have removable covers, you can wash those according to the care instructions on their tags. To remove dust from a foam pillow, vacuum both sides with your vacuum's upholstery tool. (If possible, dial down the suction strength to make the job a bit easier.) Or, tumble the pillow in the dryer on the no-heat or air-only cycle for 10 to 15 minutes. Spot-clean any soiled areas with a cloth dipped in a mild sudsy solution. Rinse with a damp cloth. Allow pillow to air-dry completely before putting it back on the bed. **GH Tip:** Some foam pillows include instructions for hand-washing. If you choose to follow them, be very gentle. Wet foam is heavy and tears easily. To help pillows stay cleaner longer, use liners under your pillowcases and wash them monthly.

Expert Advice

WHEN TO REPLACE THEM

No matter how diligent you are about cleaning your pillows, you'll need new ones eventually. How do you know when it's time to toss a pillow? Fold it in half and place a heavy book on top for 30 minutes—if it doesn't spring back into shape once the book is removed, plan a shopping trip.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Casey Dunn. Interior design, Camille Styles.

3 HANDY THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH A PILLOWCASE

1. PROTECT CLOTHES Fashion an instant garment bag by cutting a slit in the closed end of the case and slipping a hanger through.

2. WASH STUFFED TOYS Drop Teddy inside before you put him in the washer—he'll get clean and be protected from the agitation.

3. STOW LAUNDRY An embroidery hoop transforms it into a bag you can easily toss socks into from across the room.

A PRAYER FOR OWEN MEANY

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR MATTRESS

Having a clean bed means more than washing your sheets. When was the last time you cleaned your mattress?

1

DITCH DUST

Use the upholstery tool on your vacuum to go over the top and sides of the mattress and as much of the box spring as you can. Press firmly on the tool to draw out dust beneath the fabric's surface. Then use the crevice tool to get into the quilting along the edge welting and where any pillow top is attached. If you have a garment steamer, go over the mattress with that before you vacuum to help kill and remove dust mites lurking near the surface.

2

ZAP STAINS

If pets sleep with you or you like to snack in bed, chances are your mattress may have some stains on it. The easiest way to remove them is with an upholstery cleaner formulated to remove pet stains. What we like about these formulas is that they not only remove stains, but also contain enzymes to tackle odors. Avoid overwetting the mattress, and let it dry completely before making the bed.

3

KILL ODORS

To eliminate telltale odors, spray the mattress and box spring with a disinfecting spray that's safe to use on fabric and kills bacteria that cause odors. To freshen your mattress between cleanings, sprinkle some baking soda onto the fabric, then wait 15 minutes and vacuum.

Expert Advice

TRICK FOR A QUICKLY MADE BED

No matter which corner you start with, you almost always realize you've put the long end of a fitted sheet on the mattress's short end. A hint: Tags always go on the bottom. King-size sheets have their tags on the left, while queen-size sheets have them on the right. Try marking the inside seams with a fabric marker to denote right or left corners.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Eric Roth.

HOW TO FOLD A FITTED SHEET

The one-minute speed solution

1. SPREAD THE SHEET OUT on the bed with the elastic edges curved in. Fold fabric in half horizontally. Take the top layer's corners and flip them inside out; tuck them inside the corresponding corners of the bottom layer.

2. FOLD SHEET IN HALF AGAIN, so the doubled corners match up. Do the corner-flip trick once more; nestle the top layer's corners into the bottom layer's. Smooth out the sides; the elastic will now form an "L" shape.

3. FOLD THE SIDE that forms the longer part of the "L" into the center, then the opposite side over it, in thirds. Fold again, in half or in thirds, to your desired size.

5 TRICKS FOR ORGANIZING YOUR CLOSET

Try these, and poof! Space will appear right before your eyes

1

ADD MORE TENSION RODS
Traditionally, a closet's bar hangs parallel to the door. But if you sneak in a couple of extra rods (hung perpendicular to the door in the corner), you can revive a whole bunch of dead space.

2

HANG TANKS ON SHOWER RINGS
Skip folding these everyday tops and loop them onto repurposed shower rings instead. They're lightweight, so they won't stretch out, and they require far less room (and effort) to store this way.

3

FILL THE DOOR WITH BASKETS
A row of mini baskets offers a plethora of storage options and makes use of an often-ignored space—the back of the door. Clear containers also make finding things easier.

4

ORGANIZE SHOES HEEL-TO-TOE
It maximizes space (room for more shoes!) and gives you a quick survey of color, toe style and heel height to help speed up getting dressed.

5

USE SHELF DIVIDERS
They don't magically create more room, but they do provide piles of stability so you can stack sweaters that much higher. Last but not least, purge anything that doesn't fit or that you never wear.

Text, Lauren Smith. Photograph, Offset.

SPEEDY ORGANIZING TRICKS

FOCUS ON A SINGLE DRAWER
Open it and toss outdated and worn-out clothes. If you'd be embarrassed to wear an item to answer the door, out it goes.

PREVENT TANGLED NECKLACES
Tired of knotted-up necklaces? Simply thread each chain through a straw and hook the clasp. This is also a smart way to keep necklaces tangle-free when you travel; stash the straws in a clean toothbrush holder.

CONTAIN EARRINGS WITH BUTTONS
If you're always misplacing one earring or its back, take a moment to pair the pieces through the holes of a spare button. They'll look cute (and be easier to find) in your jewelry box.

CHAPTER 6

LAUNDRY ROOM

The biggest — and potentially most dangerous — mistakes you're making with your laundry, plus a few genius tricks of the trade to help you speed through the task.

Text, Alyssa Longobucco. Photograph, Gallery Stock.

SPEED CLEANING

FAST FIXES FOR YOUR EASIEST LAUNDRY DAY EVER

These time-savers will make you want to jump right in (honest)

1 **SORT FIRST, WASH SECOND** Place a laundry hamper in each bedroom so family members can help keep clothing separated each time they undress. (This will also help prevent a clothes pileup on the floor.) Use divided sorters for lights and darks, or separate baskets or bins. Before moving on to the next step, give the care and fiber labels another glance to make sure that everything in your laundry pile calls for the same water temperatures and drying times.

2 **PRETREAT FOR DAYS** It always pays off to spend extra time caring for your clothes before throwing them in the washing machine. When you spill your morning coffee on a fave shirt, don't let the stain set in while you're at work. Try a pretreater that's safe to use up to several days before wash day (check the label to be sure). To save time finding sneaky spots, try using a detergent booster, essentially a pouch of all-fabric bleach.

3 **PICK THE RIGHT DETERGENT** All laundry detergents claim to remove stains, whiten, keep colors bright and refresh garments. The problem: There are hundreds of detergents to choose from and some work better than others. That's why the Good Housekeeping Institute routinely tests laundry detergents to find the best ones on the market. Log on to *goodhousekeeping.com* to find the superstars that made our list.

4 **DON'T SKIP THE SOFTENER** Although some people may skip fabric softener, it's recommended if you want to keep fabrics soft, reduce friction and keep wrinkles at bay. With consistent use, fabric softener can extend the life of your most-loved garments. But don't use fabric softener when you're washing microfiber, sportswear, towels, flame-resistant clothes (specifically children's sleepwear) and water-repellent fabric.

5 **CHOOSE THE BEST SETTING** One cycle doesn't fit all. You probably use the Regular or Delicate cycles most often, but other settings are worth exploring. They can offer extra rinses for bulky items or slower agitation for less wrinkling. For best cleaning, use the hottest water that's safe for the fabric, and you'll avoid the need to wash again. And remember to choose the shortest wash cycle to achieve good cleaning — no need to overwash clothes.

6 **ADJUST LOAD SIZES** Cramming the wash tub with too many items isn't a useful shortcut — clothes need to move to get clean. Be strategic with the dryer, too. Overloading it adds precious minutes (as the machine has to work longer) and causes wrinkling while a too-small load means clothing may cling to the drum rather than tumble freely and easily.

7 **GO EASY ON THE DRYER** After your washing machine is finished, run a second spin cycle. This squeezes out excess water, so the dryer won't have to work as hard, shaving minutes off the process. If you have a newer high-efficiency machine, you can get the same results by selecting a higher spin speed setting with your cycle.

8 **SIMPLIFY (OR SKIP) IRONING** For smooth results, remove garments from the dryer while they are still damp and iron immediately. If items are already dry, use the spray feature on your iron as you go to get wrinkles out faster. For bedding, iron the pillowcases and top edges only of the sheets to get (almost) the same benefit of ironing the full set. Better yet, just fold and store them, and allow gravity or time to do the rest.

9 **STOP PAIRING** Folding socks takes time when you're digging through a giant heap to find matching mates. Enter sock clips: These "handcuffs" keep socks paired together from the wash to the drawers. No more lost socks!

10 **PUT IT ALL AWAY** This final step can be just as daunting as washing, but a three-bag laundry sorter makes the job easier. Place the compartmentalized bag in a laundry basket to separate clothing items into three sections (such as towels, socks and shirts). Pull the drawstring shut so nothing falls out of the basket as you make your way through doorways and up the stairs.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Getty Images.

HOW TO SORT SMARTER

1

START WITH COLOR
Clothes with saturated color are more likely to leach out their dye, so group them together. If you have a possible bleeder, like a new red sweater or a pair of indigo jeans, wash it separately the first few times. Consider adding a color-absorbing cloth, which can help to absorb some dye from the wash water.

2

MOVE ON TO FABRIC
Separate "lint-givers" from "lint-receivers." Towels shouldn't go with corduroy, for example — in the washer or dryer. It's also best to keep fabrics of similar weights together. Coarser fabrics can damage delicate ones (i.e., items with zippers or buttons can harm sweaters or lingerie) and heavier materials take longer to dry than lighter ones. In a machine that has moisture sensors, the still-damp items will also keep the load going, wasting energy.

3

FINISH WITH DIRTINESS
For very soiled or stained laundry, choose a heavy-duty or specialty cycle (like steam-cleaning) or the presoak cycle. Just remember that because these options work harder to banish dirt, they put more wear on the items in the load, which can be unnecessary for items that don't need the deep clean. Sorting by dirtiness will keep excess soils from redepositing on less-dirty items.

HOW OFTEN TO WASH...

1

BEDDING
At least every other week. If you sweat at night, wash your bedsheets weekly. On the other hand, you only need to clean pillows and comforters two or three times a year. An easy reminder: Wash them when the seasons change.

2

BATH LINENS
Towels need a spin in the washer after three or four uses. To keep them from getting musty-smelling in between washes, hang them up and give them room to air-dry thoroughly. Towels that are used after a workout need to be washed after each use.

3

CLOTHING
Not everything you wear gets dirty after you've worn it once. Jackets, dresses and jeans can be worn several times before they need a cleaning. When your denim jeans start to lose their stretch, it's time for them to hit the washing machine. Toss your pajamas in the wash after a few good nights' sleep.

Photograph, Tria Giovan/GAP Interiors.

N
GREENPORT
MONTAUK POINT
SAG HARBOR
WATERMILL
SOUTHAMPTON
EASTERN
LONG ISLAN
BOSCH
BOSCH

5 MISTAKES YOU MAKE HAND-WASHING

When washing lingerie, sweaters and other delicates by hand, avoid these common mistakes that could ruin your favorites

1

YOU PUT GARMENTS IN FIRST
Think of hand-washing as giving your clothes a bath. Just like you wouldn't step into an empty tub, you shouldn't put a sweater into the sink before adding water or detergent. The force of water hitting fabric can cause stress, and detergent can be harder to rinse out when poured right on clothes. Instead, fill your sink with warm or cool water (follow care labels). As it's filling, add detergent. Swish it in water to be sure it's completely dissolved, then lay garment in water and press it down to fully immerse it.

2

YOU WRING OUT THE WATER
Twisting and tightly wringing wet, delicate fabrics is a surefire recipe for damage. A better way to remove excess moisture is to carefully lift your garment out of the rinse water with both hands and gently squeeze out as much as you can. Then lay it flat on an absorbent towel. Roll the towel and garment together, gently squeezing as you go, then unroll.

3

YOU RINSE WITH THE FAUCET
Holding delicates up under running water can cause fabrics to stretch, so you should rinse them the same way you washed them, in a bath of clear water. When you are ready to rinse, scoop up the entire garment in both hands for support and place it in a colander. If you have a sprayer on your faucet, you may be able to thoroughly rinse any lightweight garments, like lingerie or swimsuits, right in the colander. If not, fill the sink or basin with cool, clear water; immerse the item and squeeze the water through it to rinse.

4

YOU SCRUB STAINS
Aggressive scrubbing can damage fabrics, especially fragile ones. Treat stains by gently working laundry stain remover or liquid detergent into the stain with your fingertips. Then, as it soaks, gently squeeze sudsy water through the garment. Most garments will be clean in about 15 minutes. Some heavily soiled items may need longer. *For more stain-removal tips, go to page 84.*

5

YOU HANG ITEMS TO DRY
To ensure that delicates, especially knits, don't stretch out of shape, always lay them flat to dry. Lay your sweater or swimsuit on top of a dry towel or mesh drying rack, blocking it back into shape, and allow to air-dry. Once the front is dry, turn it over to give the back some air.

Expert Advice

HAND-WASH IN YOUR WASHER
No time to hand-wash? Place item in a mesh bag and select your machine's most gentle cycle. **GH Tip:** Some new models even have a hand-wash cycle. Reshape and lay flat to dry.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Offset.

HOW TO FIX MAJOR LAUNDRY MISTAKES

Our experts have seen it all. Here are their solutions for your worst mishaps

1

PROBLEM: The colors from one item bled into another.

THE FIX: Try washing the stained item again, by itself, in warm water with detergent and color-safe bleach, or wash it with a color run remover, a product which safely eliminates transfer dye stains.

2

PROBLEM: Little bits of white tissue—on everything!

THE FIX: Before taking out the load, rewash it with a dose of fabric softener added to the final rinse. Pull off whatever you can by hand, then tumble-dry the load (the dryer's lint filter can capture much of the stuff). Use a dry scrub sponge to remove any remaining specks.

3

PROBLEM: Mildew.

THE FIX: If your clothes have a sour smell (or worse, black spots) from having been left in the washer, rewash them with chlorine or color-safe bleach, whichever is safer for the fabric.

4

PROBLEM: Dried-on stains.

THE FIX: This might be hard—but it's not impossible. Saturate the spot with an advanced stain remover, working it deep into the fabric, and allow it to set overnight. Apply a bit more, then launder with chlorine or color-safe bleach in the warmest water that's safe for the fabric.

5

PROBLEM: You shrunk your favorite sweater.

THE FIX: Sadly, this is one oops you might have to live with, but if the shrinkage is minimal, you can re-wet the sweater and try to carefully stretch it out and reshape it.

Expert Advice

GET A "RIGHT AWAY" LAUNDRY BIN

Don't get stuck with a dirty soccer uniform or ballet costume the day your kid needs it. Add an extra "priority" basket to your routine and never be empty-handed again.

3 TOOLS EVERY LAUNDRY ROOM NEEDS

1. A FOLD-AND-SORT SOLUTION Fold items as they come out of the dryer to reduce wrinkling.

2. A VERSATILE IRON Top models heat up quickly and have electronic controls to more accurately hold safe temperatures to prevent burning and scorching. They steam without dripping and are easier to use with removable water tanks and retractable cords.

3. A SOAKING SPOT When you face a fresh stain, immediately apply a stain remover, then soak in a basin of sudsy water (if you aren't doing a full load).

Text, Good Housekeeping Institute. Photograph, Corbis.

DISPENSER C • ADD FABRIC SOFTENER AT START OF CYCLE
PERSONAL SAFETY RULES
NEVER REACH INTO THE WASHER UNTIL THE BASKET HAS COMPLETELY STOPPED SPINNING.
NEVER WASH ARTICLES CONTAINING FLAMMABLE FUMES OR MATERIALS SUCH AS CLEANING AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, ETC.
NEVER ALLOW CHILDREN TO OPERATE OR TO PLAY IN, WITH OR AROUND THE WASHER.
DOOR LOCKED
RINSE
SP

ROWENTA

6 MISTAKES YOU MAKE IRONING

Here's how *not* to destroy your favorite clothes—or your appliance

1

IRONING FABRICS THAT ARE TOO DRY

Wrinkles are easier to remove when fabrics are still damp. If you can't iron garments as you take them out of the dryer, use the spray feature of your iron to mist and soften the item before passing your iron over it. Zap extra-stubborn wrinkles with a burst of steam.

2

SAVING YOUR DELICATES FOR LAST

You can make the process go more smoothly and avoid any drips by ironing the most delicate fabrics first, at lower temperature settings. Then work your way up to cotton and linen.

3

CRANKING UP THE HEAT

If the garment is made of a blend, select the setting for the more delicate fiber. It will help you preserve the garment.

4

NOT USING TAP WATER

Today's irons can handle tap water better than older models could. Unless your area's water is extremely hard, there's no reason to use distilled water. For areas with very hard tap water, mix it 50/50 with distilled. And avoid using water that's gone through a home softening system.

5

NOT CLEANING YOUR IRON

You'll want to clean the soleplate (the part you actually use to iron) occasionally, especially if yours gets gunky from starch. Try a specialized iron cleaner, which will get rid of residue on the exterior of the soleplate without damaging the iron's inner mechanisms; apply a bit of the paste to a hot iron with an old towel, then wipe clean.

6

STORING THE IRON WITH WATER IN IT

Always empty the iron's water tank and allow the last few drops to steam out before putting the iron away, especially if you store it on its soleplate. This keeps excess water from damaging the internal parts and leaking through and discoloring the soleplate.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Offset.

HOW IT WORKS
WRINKLE RELEASER

HOW IT WORKS

We consider a good wrinkle releaser a godsend here at the Institute. The magic of its smoothing power is in a blend of compounds that coat and relax fibers.

QUICK RESULTS

Ripples disappear as fabric dries, in about five to 10 minutes. Just spritz, tug and—presto!—it erases wrinkles, removes odors from clothing and bedding and eliminates static.

BEST USES

A wrinkle releaser is most effective on lightweight to mediumweight fabrics, like pillowcases and light cotton clothes. For deeply wrinkled or heavier fabrics (e.g., denim, drapes), use it in addition to ironing. Water-based formulas, are not recommended for dry-clean–only materials like silk and rayon, so be sure to check labels.

CHAPTER 7

GARAGE + OUTDOOR

Take your spring cleaning outside with these fast and easy ways to tidy, declutter and organize your exterior trouble spots.

Text, Alyssa Longobucco. Photograph, Clopay.

30 MIN.

SPEED CLEANING

FAST FIXES FOR A SPOTLESS GARAGE

It's often a dumping ground for misplaced objects and random tools, but not anymore! Tidy up from top to bottom with our easy strategies

1

ADD WALL HOOKS

Free up floor space by adding a row of customizable wall hooks. (Check out the options at your local hardware or building-supply store.) Use them to hang rakes, lawn chairs, hoses, extension cords and other outdoor essentials. **GH Tip:** Measure your longest broom or shovel before putting up hooks to ensure that the height is right.

2

ORGANIZE IN BINS

No need for fancy containers. Use what you've got: flowerpots and planters (good for pruners and stray gardening gloves), empty garbage cans (ideal for baseball bats and hockey sticks) and a laundry basket (perfect for sports gear like soccer balls and helmets).

3

TRASH YOUR TRASH

Open two heavy-duty garbage bags. Into the first one, toss anything broken, empty or rusty that can go in this week's garbage. Use the other bag for things that are in the garage but really belong in the house or outside. If you're not sure, see "6 Things That Don't Belong in the Garage," *below.*

4

DEAL WITH OIL STAINS

If fresh, sprinkle with kitty litter; let it sit a few hours; sweep away. For dried stains, let some paint thinner soak into the stain before adding kitty litter, or sprinkle washing soda on the area and mix with water to make a paste. Let sit overnight, vigorously scrub with a stiff brush and rinse.

5

SWEEP IT OUT

Finish by grabbing a broom and attacking cobwebs and bugs that have collected around light fixtures and the door to your house. Sweep to the center, then push leaves and debris right out the garage door. Done!

Expert Advice

Q. WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO STORE DANGEROUS GOODS?

A. Keep toxic solvents, cleaners and chemicals in a well-ventilated, lockable cabinet to protect against prying hands and careless spills. Put a clipboard inside with an ever-sharp pencil attached to keep a record of the contents and how long you've had each product.

6 THINGS THAT DON'T BELONG IN THE GARAGE

Play it safe—just store this stuff somewhere else

1. LEFTOVER PAINT won't last long if subjected to big fluctuations in temperature.

2. PROPANE TANKS need to be in a well-ventilated area or outside.

3. CANNED FOODS have a shorter life span in a room that gets hotter than 70°F. Move these goods to the pantry.

4. AN OLD REFRIGERATOR needs to work harder in the summer and just sucks up energy.

5. PILES OF PAPER PLATES or cups attract mice, which love to make nests in them.

6. OUTDATED ELECTRONICS Donate or dispose of them.

Text, Carolyn Forté; Lauren Piro (6 Things That Don't Belong in the Garage). Photograph, Getty Images.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR GARAGE CLUTTER-FREE LONGER

Three simple ideas to reclaim your space and keep it organized

1

PUT UP SOME PEGBOARD

A securely mounted pegboard system will get your tools—rakes, hoses, even wheelbarrows—off the floor and out of the way. Plus, you'll always be able to see what you have. Just keep a sturdy step stool or ladder handy so you can safely access overhead gear. Secure bulkier items to the board with a bungee cord. Hang a second piece of pegboard over or near a workbench and use it for hand tools, which can easily slip into cracks and crevices, drop behind the work table or disappear mysteriously when they don't have a clearly identified home. You might even trace around the tools so you'll be able to see quickly if any one is missing.

2

CREATE A DESIGNATED RECYCLING AREA

The best spot is right next to the door leading into the garage from the house. The area needs to be large enough for newspaper-, glass- and metal-recycling containers. Choose containers with greater capacity than you will normally need; that way, if you fail to recycle in a timely manner, you won't be stuck with a huge mound of clutter.

Most municipalities require that you separate recyclables into paper, glass and plastics and metals. Think about how much of each your family collects between recycling-pickup days. Make things easier by choosing different-colored containers and labeling them in large letters (unless your municipality already requires that certain colors be used for specific recyclables). For a family of four or more, small garbage cans are excellent for this.

3

HANG SHELVES

Loftlike storage options, such as a wooden shelf or easily installed rack units, are ideal for holding seasonal items like holiday decor or outdoor gear; rotate out boxes or bins as needed (don't forget to label them). Corral sports gear in a go-to bin so family members can drop off or pick up things while passing through. Tuck bikes or wagons beneath the shelf, too.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Andrew McCaul.

MORE ORGANIZING IDEAS

RAISE THE BAR
Use a mounted rail with removable hooks to hang items.

STICK 'EM UP
A magnetic knife strip is perfect for holding small metal tools, nails and screws.

KEEP IN PLAIN SIGHT
Stow rags and other bulky items in see-through bins or wire baskets.

RIDGID
LITHIUM ION 18v
STANLEY

6 OUTDOOR ITEMS YOU CAN'T FORGET TO CLEAN

When summer is just around the corner, get these things ready for grilling and chilling

1

PLASTIC FURNITURE

Add dish detergent to a bucket of warm water and use it to sponge down your outdoor tables and chairs. Then rinse clean with the garden hose.

2

OUTDOOR CUSHIONS

Check care labels to see if the covers can be machine-washed or simply hosed off. If not, spot-clean them with the same dish-liquid-and-water solution used for plastic furniture. Let dry. Then apply a weather-guarding spray to help prevent fabric from fading and staining.

3

WOOD DECKING

Take care of mold, mildew and discoloration with a specialized outdoor cleaner. Test a small spot; then apply, wait and hose off! Easy.

4

PATIO PAVERS

Erase leaf stains from concrete, brick or stone with a specially formulated rust remover.

5

METAL FURNITURE

Use the same solution as on plastic furniture. To prevent rust, place each piece on its side to drain and towel-dry the joints. **GH Tip:** Apply a thin coat of car wax to help repel new stains.

6

THE BARBECUE

Fire it up for a few minutes. Then, before it's completely cooled, go over grates with a heavy-duty scrubbing pad to remove any food bits. Use a grill cleaner when it's completely cooled.

Text, Lauren Piro. Photograph, Getty Images.

HOW TO
KEEP YOUR GRILL SIZZLING

1. COOK YOUR FOOD ON ALUMINUM FOIL

Punch holes to let flavor-boosting smoke in; toss the used sheets afterward. If you like char marks, then instead of using foil, oil the food (not the grates) with a spritz of nonstick cooking spray.

2. COVER GROUND

Place a barbecue pad under the grill to keep greasy stains off your patio or deck. We like mats made of lightweight concrete and fiber, which, unlike the rubber and plastic types, breathe so mildew buildup isn't an issue. Clean it regularly with the garden hose.

3. PLAY FIREPERSON

Keep water handy in a spray bottle to douse flare-ups before they blacken the inside of the hood.

4. PREVENT STAINS

Protect wooden side tables from dribbles with small plastic cutting boards. They're also good tools to use for carrying utensils back inside — right to the dishwasher.

5. INVEST IN A GRILL COVER

You'll never need to clean dirt, pollen or bird droppings off your unit again. Plus, it protects your BBQ from the elements to extend its life.

Expert Advice

DON'T USE A WIRE BRUSH TO CLEAN YOUR BBQ.

The bristles can break off, remain on the grill and get into food.

HOW TO CLEAN OUT YOUR CAR IN 15 MINUTES

Six speedy tricks for an organized interior

1

SORT AND TOSS

Grab a garbage bag, an empty box and a laundry basket or plastic bin. Start at the front, tossing trash into the bag and throwing anything that belongs in the house (like a stray lipstick tube) into the box; put items that stay in the car — registration, travel games — into the basket or bin.

2

WIPE EVERY SURFACE

Clean the dashboard, doorjambs, armrests and steering wheel with a container of cleaning wipes specially designed to handle grime without harming vinyl or leather. Or, use ordinary baby wipes — they're mild enough for a baby's bottom, but tough enough to do the job.

3

SHAKE AND VAC

Remove and shake out floor mats. With a handheld vac, go over seats and floor. Treat ink spots with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer (its high alcohol content can zap these stains). Slip mats back into place. **GH Tip:** A lint roller is a less hefty solution that can fit in nooks and crannies where vacuum attachments can't.

4

STOW TO GO

Now find a home for items in the for-the-car bin. Use an empty pill bottle to store coins for tolls; keep it handy in a cup holder. Consider visor and backseat organizers (look for them at a storage-solution store) to help maximize space.

5

ORGANIZE THE TRUNK

Once you empty the laundry bin, stow it in the trunk: It can hold grocery bags upright for easier transfer into the house, then ferry indoor items — like clothes for the cleaners — back to the car when it's time to run errands. **GH Tip:** Stash an old shower curtain in your trunk to line it when carting around messy garden supplies and plants, coolers or beach gear.

6

HEAD OFF A TRASH PILEUP

Fill an empty tissue box with plastic bags from the supermarket and stash it under the front seat. Whenever garbage starts to accumulate, use one of the bags to collect it.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Volvo Car USA.

3 MISTAKES YOU MAKE WASHING YOUR CAR

1. USING DISH DETERGENT
It might be handy in the kitchen, but it's too harsh on a car's paint. Use a milder car-wash cleaner instead.

2. HAVING ONLY ONE BUCKET
You actually need two: one for soapy water and one for rinsing. This trick will help ensure a streak- and scratch-free result.

3. FORGETTING TO CLEAN...
...the antenna, tires, windshield wipers, floor mats, cup holders and dashboard — all mess magnets. Make a checklist to help your memory.

CHAPTER 8

STAIN RESCUE

Your ultimate manual for removing life's toughest stains (hello, red wine!) and reviving the fabric-covered corners of your home.

Photograph, Getty Images.

THE GOLDEN RULES OF STAIN REMOVAL

Regardless of the offender, follow these rules for the best results

1

ACT FAST
The longer a stain sits, the harder it is to remove. **GH Tip:** Keep absorbent cloths handy in a kitchen, den or dining room drawer to soak up spills when they happen. Choose a laundry pretreater that can be applied up to a week before washing.

2

BLOT, DON'T RUB
Rubbing only pushes a stain in deeper. Use a clean white cloth made of cotton (the most absorbent material), then begin at the stain's outer edges and work toward the center. **GH Tip:** Save old towels; they'll do a great job of removing stains.

3

BE PATIENT
Don't rush the job. When dealing with stains, you need to give cleaning agents time to work their magic. **GH Tip:** Always air-dry a garment that's been stained until you're sure the stain is completely gone. Put it in the dryer, and the stain may set for good.

4

TEST A HIDDEN SPOT
For safety, be sure to test any stain-removing method or product on a hidden spot of fabric. This is especially important with delicate upholstery. Always follow the label's recommended care instructions.

STAIN SECRETS FOR PICNIC "ICK"

The final step? Apply a laundry pretreater and wash in the hottest water possible with fabric-safe bleach

ICE POP
Flush with cool water (or soak for 30 min.). Cool water helps keep red, pink and purple dyes from setting.

ICE CREAM
Soak 30 min. in a solution of 1 Tbsp of an enzyme-containing detergent, and 4 cups cool water.

GREASE
Apply a heavy-duty liquid laundry detergent (it has extra oil-cutting surfactants); let sit 10 min., then rinse.

MUSTARD
Massage in a few drops of glycerin (sold at pharmacies) to dissolve yellow color; let sit a few minutes, then rinse.

HEINZ
57
VARIETIES

KETCHUP
Place stain facedown on a cloth and flush with cold water (so it won't spread). Dab with white vinegar, then rinse.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE
A few household basics that make stain removal easier

1. EYEDROPPER
For small stains requiring bleach, use an eyedropper to target just the stained area.

2. DULL KNIFE
Scrape off globular stains (like ketchup and mustard) with a dull knife or a spoon before you go further.

3. TOOTHBRUSH
Gently work stain remover into fabric with a soft-bristled toothbrush if your bottle doesn't have a built-in brush.

4. ABSORBENT CLOTH
Place a paper towel or a rag underneath fabric to "pull" the stain out of the fabric while you treat it.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photographs, Offset (opposite), Mike Garten (ice pop, ketchup), Getty Images (burger, mustard), iStockphoto (ice cream).

4 SECRETS TO

REMOVING A CARPET STAIN

Coffee or wine (or worse!) won't stand a chance with these tricks

1

WE REPEAT: DON'T RUB IT IN

We said it once, and we'll say it again: Avoid rubbing the stain. This is even more important with carpets, because if you attack a stain too vigorously, you can untwist the carpet's pile (tufts) and make it look matted. Instead, blot with an absorbent cloth. Work from the outside in so the stain doesn't spread.

2

GO EASY ON THE CLEANSER

Don't use it directly on the rug (it can be hard to rinse out, and residue attracts dirt). Instead, grab your carpet-cleaning product or mix [illegible] teaspoon plain dishwashing liquid into 1 cup warm water. Spritz this on a cloth and dab the stain; turn the cloth to use clean parts as needed (or use multiple cloths). Add more cleaner as needed and continue dabbing until the stain is gone.

3

RINSE SPARINGLY

Avoid the temptation to saturate stains with cleanser or water. Doing so will wet the padding and the flooring and send the stain down into the carpet backing, making the excess difficult to rinse out: You'll be left with a sticky residue that will attract dirt. Rinse the area by dipping another cloth in clear water and dabbing the stain again until all traces of the cleanser are removed. Blot with a clean, dry cloth and fluff the pile.

4

LET IT DRY OVERNIGHT

All gone? Maybe not: Residue deep in the carpet may travel up the fibers as they dry and re-stain the carpet's surface. To prevent this, stack several paper towels over the wet spot to trap any residue still in the carpet. Place a heavy object, like a pot or a vase, on the towels and let it sit overnight.

5

CHECK IN THE MORNING

Remove the pot or vase, toss the paper towels, fluff the fibers and let the carpet air-dry completely. Once the stain is gone, vacuum the entire surface to blend the pile.

Text, Carolyn Forté. Photograph, Getty Images.

ULTIMATE STAIN GUIDE

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

FABRIC

1. Sponge stain with cool water or soak item for about 30 min. in cool water.
2. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
3. Launder. If it's safe for the fabric, add chlorine or all-fabric bleach.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Mix 2 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cool water.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with detergent solution.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.
5. Sponge with cold water and blot dry to remove detergent solution.

CARPET

1. With a clean white cloth, blot as much as possible.
2. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent and 1 Tbsp white vinegar with 2 cups warm water.
3. With a clean cloth, sponge stain with detergent-vinegar solution. Apply a little at a time, blotting with a dry cloth, until stain disappears.
4. Sponge with cold water. Blot dry to remove solution.

BLOOD

FABRIC

1. If stain is fresh, soak in cold water or use an eyedropper to add hydrogen peroxide. For dried stains, brush stain to remove surface deposit, then pretreat or soak in cool water with a laundry product containing enzymes.
2. Launder in cold water. If stain remains, rewash with bleach.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cold water. If stain has dried, brush it to remove surface deposit.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with solution.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.
5. Sponge with cold water. Blot.

CARPET

1. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cold water. If stain has dried, brush it to remove surface deposit.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with detergent solution.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears or is no longer absorbed into cloth.
5. If stain remains, mix 1 Tbsp ammonia with ⌧ cup warm water. Sponge stain with ammonia solution.
6. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
7. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

BUTTER

FABRIC

1. Scrape off excess butter.
2. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
3. Launder using the hottest water safe for the fabric.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Scrape off excess butter.
2. Sprinkle baking soda, cornstarch or other absorbent material on stain. Let stand 10 to 15 min., then vacuum.
3. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
4. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until stain disappears.

CARPET

1. Scrape off excess butter.
2. Sprinkle baking soda, cornstarch or other absorbent material on stain. Let stand 10 to 15 min., then vacuum.
3. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
4. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until stain disappears or is no longer absorbed into cloth.
6. If stain remains, mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 1 Tbsp white vinegar and 2 cups warm water.
7. Sponge stain with detergent-vinegar solution.
8. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
9. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

expert tip

QUICK FIX FOR BLOOD STAINS

If you prick your finger and get blood stains on your clothes, immediately moisten an unbloodied finger with a bit of your own saliva and apply it to the stain—watch it vanish!

stain-fighting must-haves

DRY-CLEANING SOLVENT

Look for professional-grade products like *Guardsman Dry Cleaning Fluid*. You can find them online or by seeking out a store that sells carpet-cleaning products.

ACETONE

Look for 100% pure acetone nail polish remover. Avoid products with added scents or softeners.

ENZYME DETERGENT

Most heavy-duty detergents have enzymes. Check the ingredient list to be sure.

Text, Carolyn Forté

CHOCOLATE

FABRIC

1. Scrape off excess chocolate.
2. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
3. Launder.
4. If stain remains, launder again, using bleach that's safe for the fabric.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Scrape off excess chocolate.
2. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cool water.
3. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with detergent solution.
4. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until stain disappears.
6. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

CARPET

1. Scrape off excess. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups warm water.
2. Using a clean cloth, sponge stain with detergent solution. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
3. Repeat step 2 until stain disappears or is no longer absorbed into cloth.
4. If stain remains, mix 1 Tbsp ammonia with ▯ cup warm water. Sponge stain with ammonia solution.
5. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
6. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

COFFEE

FABRIC

1. Sponge stain with cool water or soak item for about 30 min. in cool water.
2. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
3. Launder. If safe for fabric, add chlorine or all-fabric bleach.

UPHOLSTERY

METHOD 1

1. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cool water.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with detergent solution.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.
5. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

METHOD 2

1. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
2. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until stain disappears.

CARPET

1. Blot up as much as possible.
2. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent and 1 Tbsp white vinegar with 2 cups warm water.
3. With a clean cloth, sponge stain with detergent-vinegar solution. Apply a little at a time, blotting with a dry cloth until stain disappears.
4. Sponge with cold water. Blot dry to remove solution.

COOKING OIL

FABRIC

1. Blot excess oil.
2. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
3. Launder using the hottest water safe for the fabric.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Blot excess oil.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.

CARPET

1. Blot excess oil.
2. Sprinkle baking soda, cornstarch or other absorbent material on stain. Let stand 10 to 15 min., then vacuum.
3. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
4. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until stain disappears or is no longer absorbed into cloth.
6. If stain remains, mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 1 Tbsp white vinegar and 2 cups warm water. Sponge stain with solution. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
7. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

expert tip

HOW TO GET SALAD DRESSING OUT OF CLOTHES

Immediately sop up excess with a napkin or scrape off with a spoon. **Grab a sugar packet;** sprinkle it on to soak up the blob. Use an instant stain remover right away. **When you get home, sponge stain** with a dry-cleaning solvent. Take dry-clean-only garments to a pro ASAP. For washables, apply prewash stain treatment and launder.

HOW TO DEAL WITH COFFEE AND CREAM

If there's cream (or milk) in the coffee that caused the stain, be sure to use an enzyme laundry detergent when washing the item.

ULTIMATE STAIN GUIDE

CRAYON

FABRIC

1. If crayon is soft, freeze fabric to harden. Scrape off excess.
2. Place stain between clean paper towels and press with a warm iron to transfer stain to paper towels. Replace paper towels often to absorb more crayon and prevent stain from transferring to other places on fabric.
3. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
4. Launder in the hottest water safe for the fabric with fabric-safe bleach.

UPHOLSTERY

1. If crayon is soft, freeze it by applying an ice cube wrapped in a small plastic bag, then scrape off excess crayon.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.

CARPET

1. If crayon is soft, freeze it by applying an ice cube wrapped in a small plastic bag, then scrape off excess crayon.
2. Cover stain with a clean white cloth or paper towel and press using the tip of a warm iron. Repeat, using a clean part of the cloth, until stain is gone.
3. If stain remains, sponge with a dry-cleaning solvent.

DIRT

FABRIC

1. Let dry if wet.
2. Brush off as much as you can.
3. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
4. Launder.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Let dry if wet.
2. Vacuum up as much as possible.
3. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cool water.
4. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with detergent solution.
5. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until stain disappears.
7. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

CARPET

1. Let dry if wet.
2. Vacuum as much as possible.
3. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand dishwashing detergent with 2 cups warm water.
4. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with detergent solution.
5. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until stain disappears.
7. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

GRASS

FABRIC

1. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover or rub liquid laundry detergent with enzymes into stain.
2. Launder using hottest water safe for fabric plus chlorine or all-fabric bleach (if safe).

UPHOLSTERY

1. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with acetone, if safe for fabric.
2. Sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
4. If stain remains, mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cool water.
5. Sponge stain with detergent solution. Blot with a dry cloth until absorbed.
6. Mix 1 Tbsp ammonia with 2 cups cool water. Sponge stain. Blot with a dry cloth until absorbed. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

CARPET

1. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with acetone.
2. Sponge with a dry-cleaning solvent. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
3. If stain remains, mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups warm water.
4. Sponge stain with detergent solution. Blot with a dry cloth until absorbed.
5. Mix 1 Tbsp ammonia with 2 cups warm water. Sponge stain with ammonia solution. Blot with a dry cloth until absorbed.
6. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

expert tip

CRAYON CARE

If crayons are accidentally laundered with clothes, you may end up with a whole load of crayon stains. Treat the stains with dry-cleaning solvent and rewash the clothes with hot water and detergent. If color remains, launder using chlorine bleach, if safe for the fabric.

If chlorine bleach isn't an option, pretreat or soak with oxygen bleach or an enzyme laundry product using the hottest water safe for the fabric. Soak for at least 30 min., then launder.

GUM

FABRIC

1. If the gum is still soft, freeze the item to harden the gum; scrape off excess gum.
2. Sponge with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
4. Launder.

UPHOLSTERY

1. If the gum is still soft, freeze it by directly applying an ice cube inside a plastic bag; scrape off excess gum.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.

CARPET

1. If the gum is still soft, freeze it by directly applying an ice cube inside a plastic bag; scrape off excess gum.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears or is no longer absorbed into cloth.
5. If stain remains, mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 1 Tbsp white vinegar and 2 cups warm water.
6. Sponge stain with detergent-vinegar solution.
7. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
8. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

INK

FABRIC

1. Sponge with a dry-cleaning solvent until ink stops bleeding.
2. Rinse thoroughly.
3. Sponge or soak stain with rubbing alcohol. Let it air-dry.
4. If stain remains, rub liquid laundry detergent into stain.
5. Rinse.
6. Apply prewash stain remover.
7. Launder.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
2. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until stain disappears.

CARPET

1. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
2. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
3. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 1 Tbsp white vinegar and 2 cups warm water.
4. Sponge stain with detergent-vinegar solution.
5. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
6. Repeat steps 1 through 5 until stain disappears.
7. Sponge with cold water and blot dry to remove detergent-vinegar solution.

LIPSTICK

FABRIC

1. Scrape off excess lipstick.
2. Pretreat with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Using a clean white cloth, apply a dry-cleaning solvent to stained area. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed. Repeat, applying solution and blotting until stain disappears. Launder.
4. If stain remains, treat again with prewash stain remover and launder in the hottest water safe for the fabric with fabric-safe bleach.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Scrape off excess lipstick.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent. Blot until solvent is absorbed.
3. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.

CARPET

1. Scrape off excess. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent. Blot until solvent is absorbed.
3. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears or is no longer absorbed into cloth.
4. If stain remains, mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 1 Tbsp white vinegar and 2 cups warm water.
5. Sponge stain with detergent-vinegar solution. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

expert tip

QUICK FIX FOR GUM

In a pinch, rubbing white vinegar (at full strength) into the gum may soften it enough so you can pry it away from the fabric.

ICE CUBE TIP

If you're using an ice cube to freeze the gum, don't wrap the ice in plastic wrap. If you do, the plastic wrap may stick to the gum, leaving you with an even bigger mess! You can, however, put the ice in a plastic sandwich bag, which is thicker and will not stick to the gum.

QUICK FIX FOR INK

Use a cotton ball dipped in rubbing alcohol to blot out ballpoint-pen ink (on washable fabric), placing a paper towel behind the stain to draw it out of the fabric.

ULTIMATE STAIN GUIDE

MUD

FABRIC

1. Let mud dry, then brush off as much as possible.
2. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
3. Launder.

UPHOLSTERY

1. Let mud dry, then vacuum up as much as possible.
2. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cool water.
3. Sponge stain with a clean white cloth and detergent solution.
4. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until stain disappears.
6. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

CARPET

1. Let mud dry, then vacuum up as much as possible.
2. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups warm water.
3. Sponge stain with a clean white cloth and detergent solution.
4. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until stain disappears.
6. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

NAIL POLISH

FABRIC

1. Place fabric facedown on a clean white cloth or paper towels, then sponge with acetone.
2. Rinse with clean water.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until sponging no longer transfers stain to cloth or paper towels. Apply a prewash stain remover. Launder.

UPHOLSTERY & CARPET

1. Carefully blot excess polish.
2. Using an eyedropper, apply a small amount of acetone to stain.
3. Blot immediately with a dry cloth.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until no more stain is removed.
5. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
6. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
7. If stain remains, use an eyedropper to apply hydrogen peroxide directly to stain.
8. Sponge with cold water to remove peroxide, then blot dry.

POLLEN

FABRIC

1. Carefully shake out item so loose particles fall off.
2. Coax out any clingers by blotting gently with a piece of tape or using a handheld vacuum. Because pollen particles disintegrate so quickly, even brushing them with your hand can push them deeper into the fabric.
3. If a yellow stain remains, place the fabric facedown on a paper towel.
4. Dab it from the back with a dry-cleaning solvent.
5. Shift every few dabs to a clean spot on the paper towel as it absorbs the pollen, and continue blotting until the mark is as far gone as you can get it.
6. Pretreat with a laundry stain remover and wash in the hottest water safe for the fabric with fabric-safe bleach.

UPHOLSTERY & CARPET

1. Vacuum up pollen particles.
2. Use the sticky side of a piece of tape to carefully lift off remaining particles.
3. With a clean cloth, sponge stain with dry-cleaning solvent.
4. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until stain disappears.

expert tip

PIT STAINS GONE!

Even if you don't yet see stains, they can build up over time and yellow if left untreated. And because they're tough, you want to attack them with all you've got. Here's how:

1. Rub full-strength liquid enzyme detergent (look for "enzyme" on the ingredients list — it breaks up the proteins in sweat) on the underarm area and let sit 15 min.

2. Separate whites from colors and wash with a full dose of an enzyme or bleach-alternative detergent (for whitening) in the hottest water that's fabric-safe.

3. Got a resistant stain? Add a laundry stain remover or fabric-safe bleach.

SWEAT

FABRIC

1. Check to see if stain has changed fabric color. If so, apply ammonia to fresh stains, white vinegar to old ones. Rinse.
2. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover or rub liquid enzyme detergent into stain.
3. Launder using the hottest water safe for the fabric. Stubborn stains may also respond to chlorine or oxygen bleach in the hottest water safe for the fabric.

UPHOLSTERY & CARPET

1. Mix 1 tsp of liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 1 Tbsp ammonia and 2 cups cool water.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with detergent-ammonia solution.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
4. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 1 Tbsp white vinegar and 2 cups cool water.
5. Sponge stain with detergent-vinegar solution.
6. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
7. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with rubbing alcohol. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
8. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

TOMATO (JUICE, PASTE, SAUCE)

FABRIC

1. Working from the back of stain, flush with cold water.
2. Pretreat with a liquid laundry detergent. If stain is hardened, tamp or break it up with the back of a spoon so the detergent penetrates; let stand several minutes.
3. Rinse well.
4. Sponge with white vinegar.
5. Rinse well.
6. Repeat steps 2 through 5 until you have removed as much stain as possible.
7. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
8. Launder.
9. If stain remains, rub with a liquid laundry detergent, then soak in warm water for up to 30 min.
10. Launder with fabric-safe bleach if necessary.

UPHOLSTERY & CARPET

1. Mix 1 Tbsp liquid hand-dishwashing detergent with 2 cups cool water.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with detergent solution.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until liquid is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.
5. Sponge with cold water and blot dry.

WAX

FABRIC

1. If wax is still soft, freeze the item to harden the wax, then scrape off excess wax.
2. Sponge with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Place stain between clean paper towels and press with a warm iron to transfer the wax to the paper towels. Replace paper towels frequently to absorb more wax and prevent stain from transferring to other places on the fabric.
4. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover.
5. Launder using chlorine bleach (if safe for the fabric) or oxygen bleach.
6. If any color remains, rewash with bleach.

UPHOLSTERY & CARPET

1. If wax is still soft, freeze it by applying an ice cube wrapped in a small plastic bag, then scrape off excess wax.
2. Using a clean white cloth, sponge stain with a dry-cleaning solvent.
3. Blot with a dry cloth until solvent is absorbed.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until stain disappears.

QUALITY TESTED · GOOD · HOUSEKEEPING Since 1909 LIMITED WARRANTY · ghseal.com for details

JANE FRANCISCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR,
HEARST LIFESTYLE GROUP
Melissa Geurts
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

GH INSTITUTE
Laurie Jennings GENERAL MANAGER

HOME CARE & CLEANING LAB
Carolyn E. Forté EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mallory Roynon PROJECT ART DIRECTOR
Dana A. Levy MANAGING EDITOR

HEARST
specials

Jacqueline Deval
VP, PUBLISHER HEARST BOOKS

Zach Mattheus
GROUP CREATIVE DIRECTOR
HEARST BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY HEARST
Steven R. Swartz
PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
William R. Hearst III
CHAIRMAN
Frank A. Bennack, Jr.
EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN
Mark E. Aldam
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

HEARST MAGAZINE MEDIA, INC.
Debi Chirichella
PRESIDENT
Kate Lewis
CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER
Regina Buckley
CHIEF FINANCIAL & STRATEGY OFFICER;
TREASURER
Brian Madden
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
CONSUMER REVENUE & DEVELOPMENT
Jonathan Wright PRESIDENT,
HEARST INTERNATIONAL
Catherine A. Bostron SECRETARY

Gilbert C. Maurer, Mark F. Miller
PUBLISHING CONSULTANTS

Please Recycle This Magazine
Remove Inserts or Samples Before Recycling

Copyright © 2023
Hearst Communications, Inc.
Published by Hearst Magazine Media, Inc.
300 W. 57th Street New York, NY 10281

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

Photograph, Mike Garten. Interior design, Chango & Co.